JULY–SEPTEMBER 1952

Crossroads

SUCCESSOR TO THE WESTMINSTER ADULT BIBLE CLASS

A Study and Program Magazine for Adults

VOLUME 2 : NUMBER 4

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The Tree on the Cover

Luigi Lucioni has long been one of the Editor's favorite artists. Therefore, when this picture of his painting came across his desk, CROSSROADS claimed it before any of the other editors had a chance to see it! And summer seems an ideal time to feature an elm tree in full verdure, uncrowded in a field.

We asked one of our associates how she liked the picture. She looked long and thoughtfully at it and then said, "It's very nice; but what does it mean?" It doesn't mean anything! You have become accustomed to cover pictures on CROSSROADS that are capable of some interpretation, but this tree is not one of them. Under summer's halcyonic influence, the Editor gives you Lucioni just because it's a beautiful painting.

Luigi Lucioni was once called the "painter laureate" of Vermont for his famous works depicting that state. Perhaps this elm tree is there; but as far as we are concerned, it is just like one we pass on the way to church.

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CROSSROADS is published quarterly by the Publication Division of the Board of Christian Education of Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1009 Sloan St., Crawfordsville, Ind. Entered second-class matter at the Post Office at Crawfordsville, Ind., under the Act of March 3, 1879. School subscriptions, two or more to one address, $1.40 a year, 35 cents a quarter each. Single subscription, $1. a year.

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Editorial offices, Witherspoon Building, Walnut and Juniper Streets, Philadelphia 7, Pa.

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re the currently popular religious dramas by Dorothy Sayers, T. S. liot, and Christopher Fry part of the long tradition of drama being ritten to the glory of God? Miss Blackburn believes that they are, nd in this delightful article she introduces us to some of the earlier lays in the English language that dealt with religious themes.

Religion on Stage

By Ruth H. Blackburn

It is Easter morning in Winchester about a thousand years ago. Winchester was King Alfred's headquarters in his long struggle against the Danes, but now England is precariously united under Alfred's great-grandson, the statesmanlike Edgar. Up with the spring dawn, the people of the town watch the sun struggling through the morning mist as they go into the cathedral for morning service. They kneel and stand by turns, familiar with the rhythm of prayer and praise; but as the third lesson is being chanted, the usual order is surprisingly, dramatically interrupted. One of the brothers, in his long white alb, moves from his choir stall to the veiled tomb where, on Good Friday, a cross was ceremonially laid. As he sits there, with his palm in his hands, the west door of the church is opened, and all heads turn to see three robed figures walk reverently up the nave, swinging censors. Representing the three Marys, they move solemnly, "as if seeking," toward the sepulcher. As they approach, the angel at the tomb rises and begins to chant,

"Whom seek ye in the tomb, O followers of Christ?"

By now the worshipers are on tiptoe with excitement, and the Marys chant in answer,

"Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified, O celestial one."

The angel replies in triumph,

"He is not here, he is risen, just as he foretold. Go, announce that he is risen from the dead."

Obedient, the women turn and sing joyfully,

"Alleluia! The Lord is risen today," while the angel invites the people,

"Come, see the place where the Lord was laid."

And, saying this, the angel arises, lifts the veil, and shows them the place bare of the cross. Then the prior leads the congregation in the joyful anthem, "We praise thee, O God." On this note of rejoicing in the resurrection, the people go forth into the spring sunshine, while (as the old account concludes) "all the bells chime out together."

And so, in the simple, reverent service, on a high festival of the Church, English drama began.

That it should have its birth in Christian worship was the most natural thing in the world. Both drama and religion touch the deep places of the human heart. Both use story, myth, and symbol to say things about human life and God that cannot really be expressed in formula, essay, or sermon. From earliest times, drama has been used to clarify and intensify the service of worship itself. Tropes, that is, brief dramatic dialogues, like the Easter one just described, were written for other special occasions of the Church year. At Christmas there was a procession of "prophets" of the Christ —Moses, Balaam (with a real donkey), Isaiah, John the Baptist in his camel's hair; and to represent the Greco-Roman expectation, the classical figure of the Sibyl and the Roman poet, Virgil, who had foretold that a child was to be born who would bring back the age of gold. The numerous saints' days and holy days of the Church calendar provided many occasions for new plays and stirred imaginations to explore the rich possibilities of dramatizing the Scriptures. For example, a play on the slaughter of the innocents was performed on the feast day commemorating that event. Here the whole church was, in effect, the stage, one corner representing Bethlehem, one Herod's palace, and a third the distant land of Egypt. The choir boys (although they were hardly infants under two!) were pressed into service as the martyred infants, and were well and truly slain by order of a ranting Herod.

Drama Moves from the Sanctuary

So far the plays were in the church itself, and in Latin. But between the twelfth and the fourteenth centuries, they moved out of the church and out of the hands of the clergy. This was inevitable and, in the long run, desirable, as possibilities for variety and richness were increased in a freer situation. However, it did mean that drama has not been able to get back into the church itself until fairly recent times, and then only under rather unusual circumstances. This separation of drama from the life of the Church has meant a severe loss to our religious life.

But, in the later Middle Ages, the performance of Biblical and other religious plays outside the churches was still a deeply religious event in the lives of the people and was carried out with due reverence and solemnity, although we may be sure with a great deal of fun and excitement. All the resources of the rich craft guilds—their membership, their wealth, their special skills—were now combined to produce the

MISS BLACKBURN has studied religious drama, particularly the medieval period, at New York University.

plays with a lavish care that would have been impossible under the auspices of the clergy. One whole day in the year—the feast of Corpus Christi—was set aside by papal proclamation for the presentation of the entire "cycle" of plays, beginning (soon after dawn) with the Creation, and ending, perhaps late in the evening, with the Day of Judgment. The length of the cycle depended on the size of the city, its prosperity, and the number of its guilds. Some towns could afford only five or six plays, whereas the prosperous city of York had a cycle of forty-eight.

In York a number of the old guild records survive for 1415 (the year of Henry V's victory at Agincourt) and give us a vivid picture of the complexities of preparation. Soon after Easter the town council met in state in the guildhall to decide which guild should produce each play. Their attempts to match play to profession are charming. The plasterers create the earth, the shipwrights build the ark, while the mariners stock it and set it asail. In the Nativity narratives, the candlemakers produce the star in the east, and the thatchers the stable, while the shoers of horses see the Holy Family safely to Egypt. The modern reader smiles and gasps by turns. We can see the convenience of having the bakers do the Last Supper, but the selection of the butchers to arrange the crucifixion, although wholly in the spirit of medieval realism, seems to us rather shocking.

Once the plays and parts were distributed, the actors set to work to practice. We know little about the rivalries and anguishes of rehearsals, except that they were the occasion of consuming large quantities of ale for which the charges appear in guild accounts! We do know that when the great day came—the feast of Corpus Christi fell early in midsummer—half the population must have been up most of the night with excitement. The crier had been twice around the town the afternoon before. At 4:30 A.M., sharp, "all manner of craftsmen" were bidden to "bring out their pageantry in order." Each guild had its own "pageant," a flat six-wheeled wagon built in two tiers, the lower section curtained for "tiring," and the upper one the stage. Probably the most agile of the citizenry had already perched themselves in trees or on the city wall, and set up a shout as the tanners rolled up the first "station" by Holy Trinity Church, to perform the first play, *The Creation of Heaven and the Fall of Lucifer*. As they wheeled their pageant on to perform again at "the door of Robert Harphan," the plasterers moved up and presented *The Creation of the Earth*.

So the pageants came and went, and the whole of Biblical history, centering on God's scheme of redemption, was set forth in color, dialogue, and action. The first eleven plays dealt with the Old Testament figures; the rest of the plays, in great detail, with the life, mission, and death of Jesus. In the final tableaux, Christ, Mary, and the twelve apostles are seen in glory. Each play was performed at each of twelve designated spots in the city, so that all might see, and all day the crowds gaped and cheered. It must have been weary players indeed who dragged their great wagons into the "pageant house" at nightfall. There was much still to be done. A list was made of articles needing renewal or repair—"hosen andtayle for ye serpant," a "cote of apis skins" for an angel, a "rybbe colored red" for the creation of Eve, "an earthquake" and various oddments for "the mouth of hell." The treasurer added up his accounts and noted bills still outstanding for "iron lamps for the pageant" and "gilding the face of God." The actors still had to be paid—one shilling, sixpence to the devil, two shillings for God and Pilate's wife, while Herod, who played a much meatier part, got three shillings, fourpence. And the citizens of York had had an expensive and exhausting day, but a glorious one.

Religious Drama Neglected

The sixteenth century, the period of the Renaissance and the Reformation, was to be an age of violent change. The relatively close relation between the Church and the culture that had produced the religious cycles was disrupted. Almost no new plays were written, and much of the heart had gone out of the performance of the old ones. The guilds complained of rising costs and paid fines rather than perform. Norwich's once proud pageant equipment was sold for scrap. The York plays faded out about 1580. There was competition from traveling actors playing farcical interludes. But beyond all these factors in importance was the Protestant Reformation. The doctrines of Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin were soon circulated in England. Tyndale's New Testament came out in 1525, Coverdale's a decade later, and in 1539 the Great Bible was chained in every church (by the orders of Henry VIII). Early in Elizabeth's reign appeared the Geneva version, the Bible in the pocket of every Puritan, and the one most used by Shakespeare. The new theology and the new vernacular Bible affected popular drama in that thinkers with Protestant leanings soon objected to plays revolving around the Virgin Mary, medieval saints, and "Papist" theological doctrines. The Puritan objections to the theater in general, however, were not voiced until very much later in the century. On the contrary, most of the new plays that were written up to the end of Edward's reign (1553) were written by leading Protestants, the redoubtable Bishop Bale being the most prolific. Unfortunately, few of the plays are of much literary or historical interest, as they are heavily homiletic and bitterly anti-Catholic.

The best of these sixteenth century plays, perhaps written for performance by Eton schoolboys, was based on the story of Jacob and Esau. It is a lively expansion of the Bible narrative into a good personality-conflict-suspense situation. The characters are well drawn and their motivations are credible. Esau has an insatiable passion for hunting; so his stay-at-home brother is preferred by Rebecca, a typical doting mother un-

ware of her favoritism. Isaac is a prosy old man, in-ined to explain theology (of a distinctly Puritan st!) to anyone who will listen. There is a very funny mic servant who mimics Esau's solemn sarcasms. ut the most interesting feature of the play is the not nsuccessful attempt to paint an authentic Old Testa-ent background. These people are not, like the shep-rds in a medieval Nativity play, English rustics. hey mention polygamy, tents, horns on the altar, nd the ceremonial purification of sacred vessels. The unt for the goat and the making of the "pottage" which sounds delicious) are described with what is early intended to be Hebrew flavor. This awareness a real historical background to a Bible story may e connected with the increased concern to study the cripture narrative in relation to other Near Eastern ultures. As far as I know, it is the first use of "local olor" in any English play.

The interest in writing Protestant religious plays as quite short-lived. Most of the writers had to flee or their lives during Mary's brief but unhappy at-empt to bring England back to Catholicism. Then by ne time Elizabeth's reign was well under way, the mportant dramatic writing was being done for the opular theaters in London and did not deal with re-gious themes to any large extent. Perhaps Shakes-eare and his fellow dramatists felt that the Bible as source book had been—temporarily at least—drained ry. Or perhaps doctrinal issues were so touchy that iblical stories were felt to be too hot to handle. What-ver the cause, we have no play on a Biblical subject y Shakespeare, although thousands of echoes and allusions show how well he knew the Genevan Bible and *The Book of Common Prayer*. Of course, he treated some of the most profoundly Christian themes: perhaps the most unforgettable of all dramatic expressions of Christian forgiveness is where Cordelia wipes out the unkindness and injustice of her father with the simple, "No cause, no cause." But how one wishes that the dramatist who makes Isabella plead so eloquently for mercy on her enemy had brought alive on the stage the story of Esther; that he who wrote "to be or not to be" had elaborated Paul's "The good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do"!

The Work of an "Atheist"

Ironically enough, it was the so-called "atheist" Marlowe who wrote the most religious play of Shakespeare's age and one of the most moving poetic tragedies of all time. "Atheist" in those days was a term loosely applied to anyone who questioned fundamental orthodox positions, and was a most dangerous charge. When Marlowe was reported to have doubted the truth of the Flood story, described Moses as a juggler, and called "all Protestants . . . hypocritical asses," we can well imagine the effect on the public, especially the pious. But anyone who has taught Sunday school knows very well that the child who continually disrupts the class with destructive comments and scathing skepticisms often has more on his mind than showing off! He may, by his very denials, be asking for reassurance that someone believes, even if he doesn't; he may be searching for a faith that the more docile will never find. Certain it is that when Marlowe drama-

The climax of the Oberammergau *Passion Play* is reached when Christ is hung on his cross between the thieves.

tized the old German story of Faustus, who for twenty-four years of absolute power sold his soul to the devil, he coupled a restlessly inquiring skepticism with deep religious insight. "Come," he says, in the person of Faustus, "I think hell's a fable."[1] "Aye," says Mephistophilis, "think so still, till experience change thy mind." The devil himself has a more spiritual definition of hell than Milton was to achieve some fifty years later. It must have rung strangely on Elizabethan ears:

> "Think'st thou that I, who saw the face of God,
> And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,
> Am not tormented with ten thousand hells,
> In being deprived of everlasting bliss?"

Marlowe seems to be aware that he who treats with the devil always loses. Faustus repents of his bargain before, during, and after its consummation. "'The reward of sin is death:' that's hard," he reminds himself early in the play as he bids "Divinity, adieu," and turns to "magic, that hath ravished me." But the power that was to bring "all things that move between the quiet poles" under his command, and to "resolve [him] of all ambiguities," proved a disappointment and a mockery. His complete realization of this is brought out in a masterpiece of dialogue between him and his fellow students as he awaits Lucifer:

"*Second Scholar:* Yet, Faustus, look up to heaven; remember God's mercies are infinite.

"*Faustus:* But Faustus' offense can ne'er be pardoned. . . . Though my heart pants and quivers to remember that I have been a student here these thirty years, O, would I had never seen Wittenberg, never read book! and what wonders I have done, all Germany can witness, yea, all the world; for which Faustus hath lost both Germany and the world, yea, heaven itself, heaven, the seat of God, the throne of the blessed, the kingdom of joy; and must remain in hell for ever—hell, ah, hell for ever!"

Then comes the terrible soliloquy where, in a line transported from Ovid's *Amores,* Faustus begs the "horses of the night" to drive slowly, that he may have time to repent:

> "The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike,
> The devil will come, and Faustus must be damned.
> O, I'll leap up to my God!—Who pulls me down?—
> See, see, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!
> One drop would save my soul, half a drop: ah, my Christ!—
> Ah, rend not my heart for naming of my Christ!
> Yet will I call on him: O, spare me, Lucifer!—
> Where is it now? 'tis gone: and see, where God
> Stretcheth out his arm, and bends his ireful brows!
> Mountains and hills, come, come, and fall on me,
> And hide me from the heavy wrath of God!"

The whole speech has tremendous lyric and dramatic power, but perhaps the most poignant lines are those in which he begs to be released from the curse of immortality:

> "Impose some end to my incessant pain;
> Let Faustus live in hell a thousand years,
> A hundred thousand, and at last be saved!
> O, no end is limited to damnéd souls!
> Why wert thou not a creature wanting soul?
> Or why is this immortal that thou hast?"

But the devil takes him away, and the Chorus repeats with solemn emphasis:

> "Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,
> And burnéd is Apollo's laurel-bough,
> That sometime grew within this learnéd man."

The lines were to be Marlowe's own epitaph: before the year was out, he was killed in a brawl in a Deptford tavern. In a sense, his magnificent play was the epitome of an epoch. All that Church drama had implied, all that the morality plays, such as *Everyman,* had tried to say, are here set forth in this greatest play on man's choice between damnation and redemption.

The Twentieth Century

When the Puritans closed the theaters in 1642, they merely wrote the death certificate for what was already an almost lifeless corpse. Decadent for a quarter of a century, Elizabethan drama was now no more. And since that time, really since the "atheist" Marlowe died at 29, no dramatist appeared with the capacities to write a great play on a religious theme until an iconoclastic, redheaded Irishman startled Edwardian London about sixty years ago. George Bernard Shaw, though he professed no religious faith, wrote plays that were implicitly or explicitly religious, such as *The Devil's Disciple, Back to Methuselah,* and the delightful *Androcles and the Lion.*

In the past twenty years we have witnessed a new wave of religious plays, beginning with such successful Broadway productions as *Green Pastures, Family Portrait,* and *Journey to Jerusalem.* But perhaps the most important development along these lines in the nineteen thirties and T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral,* for its emotional power and the beauty of its verse encouraged a revival of poetic drama in which Eliot was followed by Dorothy Sayers, Charles Williams, Christopher Fry, and others. After the success of *The Zeal of Thy House* (on her favorite theme of integrity), Miss Sayers was encouraged to continue experimenting with religious drama. Returning to the medieval idea of religious cycles, she wrote a series of twelve radio plays on the life of Christ, *The Man Born to Be King.* They were broadcast by the BBC during the war and aroused considerable public enthusiasm.

At present there seems to be a continuing interest on Broadway in religious themes. As one young theatergoer observed last year, "I don't see how people can say Christianity isn't true, when practically every play we see proves it—shows it has the very deepest insights." Even a melodrama like *Detective Story* might have been entitled *The Moat and the*

(Continued on page 11)

[1] This and following quotations are from *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus,* as found in the version in *The Literature of England,* Vol. I, by Woods, Watt, & Anderson. Published by Scott, Foresman & Co., and used by permission.

The Handicapped Child in Your Home

By John Charles Wynn

THE young mother loved children deeply. She always had. When her own baby came, her joy was tremendous. The little one's beautiful eyes, her unusually pretty features, her early signs of intelligence —all seemed to forecast a happy, useful life during the years ahead. As she grew through those early months of babyhood, she was consistently healthy and always good. She was the kind of child who drew murmured compliments from the complete strangers who were attracted to look into the baby carriage.

When it was that the baby ceased to grow, the mother could never tell. Ever so gradually she began to notice occasional signs of difficulty. The child was slow in learning to walk; she was not yet talking at the age of three; her span of attention was short. An incessant restlessness seemed to possess her, pushing her on to activity that appeared purposeless. Her eyes, though lovely, were unresponsive. Her reflexes were slow and weak.

When the pediatrician called a consultation of doctors, the mother received their verdict with breaking heart. The little girl was retarded. She was feeble-minded!

Then began the long treks to other doctors, to specialists, to clinics, to hospitals. But nothing ever helped. At last Pearl Buck (for that was the mother's name) sorrowfully accepted the facts as they were, and set about adjusting to the crisis. The story of her disappointment and struggle is told in *The Child Who Never Grew,* published by John Day Company in 1950.

Pearl Buck's pilgrimage from proud parenthood to despair, through scores of tests and consultations and interviews, is too familiar to countless thousands of parents. Although they suffer in different degrees, the families who have handicapped children understand the heartbreaking problem. Their child may be feeble-minded; or he may be blind, perhaps crippled or deformed, deaf, spastic, or epileptic. The complications of handicaps seem endless. But among the families that have experience in them there is a common bond. It is the anguish of seeing a loved one thwarted.

Family Complications

For the parent of the handicapped child there is a continual pain. He suffers from visions of what the life of this son or daughter might have been. Often he is worried over how the child would fare if both the parents were to be removed by death. Or he notices the concomitant difficulties that sometimes develop: emotional strain, inferiority complex, or pessimism.

The latter—the secondary characteristics—are those which complicate family life. The long, unrelieved care of an invalid can put a strain on marriage, can lead even to divorce. It is possible for the healthy members of a family to become warped under the weight of their burden. Tempers grow short, smiles disappear as the home is geared to the needs of one member whose disability seems to crowd other considerations aside.

But harmony in the home is important to the well-being of the disadvantaged child himself. Normal family life will benefit him and his brothers, sisters, and parents. The necessity of serenity and love in the home can hardly be overestimated. There are ways by which a family can make this all-important adjustment.

The Wrong Approach

1. *Ignoring the problem.* Whatever be the sorrow of the parent as he watches a deformed daughter try to

make her way in life, there is no excuse for an attitude that would ignore the difficulty. It does not help to pretend that the handicap does not exist.

In *The Glass Menagerie,* by Tennessee Williams, Laura once speaks of her crippled condition. "Nonsense! Laura," her excited mother replies. "I've told you never, never to use that word. Why, you're not crippled, you just have a little defect—hardly noticeable, even! When people have some slight disadvantage like that, they cultivate other things to make up for it—develop charm—and vivacity—and *charm!* That's all you have to do!"[1]

But refusal to face the truth has never been known to solve a problem. Quite the contrary, in this sense also, to know the truth is to be set free. Medical men are often astonished at the ability of people to "take it" when they learn the truth.

To know and to accept the reality of the situation are the first sure steps toward a remedy. But if lies have been indulged, then the road to real recovery is doubly difficult. The discouragement is greater; the hurt seems deeper. *To realize the nature of the problem opens the way to solving it.*

Nothing is gained by retreating from the facts.

2. *Finding the blame.* Inevitable as it seems to be, it is just as fruitless for the parent to bemoan his fate and ask, "What did I ever do to deserve this?" To presume that the handicap of a child must be the punishment of a parent's sin is to present a gross caricature of God.

When this same false impression came up in regard to the blind man, according to *John, ch. 9,* Jesus criticized the question. "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" the disciples asked him. Jesus answered, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." Once again had the need of man become the opportunity for God's grace.

There was a time when heredity was held to be the certain cause of any malformation in a child. Today this notion is considered by experts as an old wives' tale. Few abnormalities in children are now ascribed to heredity.

A great danger lies in this misunderstanding. A mother may begin to probe into her background, regretting that she took this medicine, or went to that doctor. A father may blame himself because of some past error, or perhaps even for marrying his wife at all. The upshot of this self-torture too often is that parents then take it out on the child himself, unwittingly punishing him for their self-incriminations.

Unexplained though they often are, these misfortunes can occur in any family. Perhaps four fine healthy children are born into a home, and then an idiot. The difficulty may be traced to a hormone deficiency, to German measles in a mother-to-be, or to a dozen other causes, or perhaps only to mystery. The important thing is not to fix blame, but to take steps to help the child.

3. *Expecting too much.* A third wrong approach to the child with a handicap is to push him to a performance beyond his ability. Because of family pride (rather than for the child's own welfare) he may be pressed to an effort of which he is incapable. Many an emotional disturbance in some disadvantaged youngster has been unnecessarily brought on by the overstrenuous insistence of parents. To demand that a cerebral palsy case feed himself neatly, or that a cleft palate should pronounce words exactly, is as unfair as it is senseless.

Cases are cited of feeble-minded children being taught to appear as if they can play bridge. Unenlightened parents have punished deaf children because they did not obey quickly. One father refused to walk with his son who had cerebral palsy, but would only follow behind him because he was ashamed.

The gross mistakes of unfeeling parents can severely retard the child's adjustment and can add further psychological difficulties to his already hard road.

4. *Pampering the handicapped.* It is not kind, however, to spoil the handicapped child with too much service and pampering. He needs love, but he also needs discipline. The parent who turns his back on the daughter who has fallen may want dreadfully to help her up, but he knows that she must train her muscles to walk carefully and to get up herself. The mother who straps her crippled son's foot to the tricycle pedal is not cruel; she is helping him.

If the family waits on the child hand and foot, it is not unlikely that he will become a spoiled tyrant. Aside from the strain this puts on the family and on himself, it fails to equip him for the days ahead when he must stand on his own.

The Amazing Therapy of Love

To find the proper median between pampering the handicapped child and overworking his frail strength, one can turn to no fixed formula. Yet a general principle can be applied; it is old, tried, and proved. It is the way of *love!*

As much as any child, yes, more than most, the child with a handicap needs love. Not just the hugs-and-kisses variety of affection will do the trick. Love must show itself through patience and understanding. It is essential that such a child feel that he is wanted in a family, that he belongs there and is secure. On this basis must rest any treatment. The child requires love, no matter how repulsive may be his handicap, how trying his behavior.

The understanding parent will not threaten. A lame or deaf child already has enough fears. Nor will the child be expected always to show courage. The terrors of an affliction are great. If, at times, the youngster becomes frustrated and tearful, it should cause no surprise.

Parental Attitudes

Sidonie Gruenberg, of The Child Study Association, writes: "Careful studies have shown that the attitude of parents toward their handicapped child has more influence on his adjustment than the severity of the handicap itself."[2] Prominent among the requirements for such parents is that they think of their child first of all as a child, and only incidentally as a child with a handicap. It is important that handicapped children be treated as persons, never as "cases" or as liabilities. If they are to conquer their disadvantages, this much encouragement they need at the least.

The child who is born with a withered arm is not unlike other children except in this outstanding characteristic. With other normal children, he has much in common. He also needs a sense of security. He also requires love. He also seeks fun and pleasure along his own lines. The laws of learn-

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[1] Copyright Tennessee Williams. Copyright and published 1945 by Random House, Inc. Reprinted by courtesy of Random House, Inc.

[2] *Your Child and You,* by Sidonie Gruenberg. Copyright, 1950, Fawcett Publications, Inc. Reprinted by courtesy. A Gold Medal Book.

ng apply to him as they do to others, ut for him learning is more torturus. All in all, he is much more simar to other children than different rom them.

The parents need not waste symathy on these little ones. Sympathy or what they are missing ("Oh, it's uch a pity that Jackie can't play all!") is misplaced and borders on he cruel. More constructive lines are vailable to the family than sitting y in pity.

Incidentally, you can be assured hat the parents' own attitude will be mirrored by others. The normal brothers and sisters of such a child will be s considerate as the parents. But if he parent bears a secret resentment gainst this misfortune, no matter ow carefully it is hidden, it will be noticed by the family. Probably, too, t will also be copied by other children n the family who will show much more openly their resentment and hate. The way to family love is by parental example.

A Program of Action

There is more that parents can do than to guard their own attitudes. They can go to work on a constructive plan of action. It is not long before the parent who suffers with this family problem begins to discover others who are going through the same valley of difficulty. Together, in a fellowship of understanding, these parents can create mutual support. More and more now, parents' groups are being organized around such shared problems as cerebral palsy, poliomyelitis, or retarded mentality. In these circles they feel none of the embarrassment occasionally encountered when they are among parents of normal children. To report in such a group that "my boy spoke three new words this week" can mean more to those who understand the torture of speech defect than a football letter to an athlete's family.

Parents' groups can study carefully the nature of a particular handicap and some of its remedies. They can become acquainted with handcrafts and the various methods of therapy that can be used.

Alone, each parent can go to work on the problems of nicknames and ridicule. If the cripple is dubbed "Limpy," or the obese "Fatso," it may hurt feelings. But the practice should draw no more sympathy than a scratch on the knee. Most of all, the parent should not interpret it as a personal insult.

It cannot be too strongly stated that the child's general health needs to be guarded, so that the handicap is not further complicated. It will be of real help to have good resistance to colds and a strong body to count on. On this point the authorities agree: when a good doctor is located in whom the parents have confidence, they should shop no farther but should keep close to him. The error is sometimes made of chasing from one medical man to another, dissipating money, and tiring the child. Somehow the family hopes to find one who will do what the others cannot. But when a competent specialist has begun treatment, his judgment should be respected.

The entire family feels better when it is doing something to relieve the strain of the illness or abnormality. Such action lessens emotional tension. It avoids a feeling of helplessness.

The parents are unwise who drop all social and community activities in order to devote their full time to a handicapped son or daughter. It is for the very child's sake that the parents ought to keep up normal living, so that their outlook and disposition can be healthy enough to face the crisis at home. In so far as possible, the family ought to live as other families do, not ignoring the handicap, but adjusting it in the life of the child and home. This is a far wiser measure than magnifying an illness to such proportions that it dominates all else.

There Are Compensations

"Our strength," Emerson claimed, "grows out of our weakness." Certainly there are innumerable examples of overcompensation in which the handicapped person worked so hard to meet his difficulty that in so doing he surpassed even normal persons. Ignace Paderewski had weak fingers. Glenn Cunningham had been maimed in the legs by fire. Charles Darwin actually said, "If I had not been so great an invalid, I should not have done nearly so much work as I have accomplished." It is alleged by many that handicaps have quite as good a chance to make a person as to break him. The number of handicapped people who have attained success make it appear that such a disadvantage is almost a qualification for success.

Some reasons can be traced for this seeming paradox. Those who are disabled are often able better to concentrate their energies. They have a more complete knowledge of their limitations and how to work within them. The maimed and the blind are accustomed to analyzing their movements. So skilled do some blind people become in stretching their other senses that their abilities are proverbial. Indeed, the Chinese have for years regarded the blind as almost supernatural persons because of their seeming miraculous abilities.

There is nothing to prevent a crippled boy from developing in music the skills he could not achieve in sports. The chronic invalid who has a rheumatic heart can nonetheless learn painting or excel in scholarship.

One mother reports that of her four children the best adjusted is the least healthy—a girl who is lame from osteomyelitis.

Even the mentally retarded children offer compensations. Some of these are indirect. Pearl Buck learned from her daughter patience, tolerance, human compassion. Because their desires are less complex, retarded children are generally happy, and they help to spread cheer to others.

Not a few researchers in the area of childhood handicaps are those whose own children have suffered from some difficulty. This misfortune has spurred them to work in the field of their sympathy.

It is a truism to state it: were it not for our problems, we would have little progress. The insight is well put in the words of Lachlen McLachlen in the play, *The Hasty Heart,* by John Patrick. Lachlen says, "I had tae be hurt tae learn." It is not necessary to suffer such hardship in order to show qualities of heroism and courage. But it is indeed possible to achieve a personal victory for the family within the adverse circumstances themselves.

That family which approaches this problem with a faith that God's grace is sufficient for it begins with part of the victory won. Those who know the balm of prayer, and the strength from tapping spiritual sources far deeper than their own, report much calmness and serenity in the midst of all their trouble.

Copies of this article are available in limited quantity for distribution to people interested in the problem. They may be secured free from your nearest Presbyterian Distribution Service center.

God of the Basin and the Towel

John 13: 1-17

Jesus not only spoke parables: he also dramatized them. Therefore, when he wanted to impress upon his disciples the real meaning of his crucifixion and resurrection, he performed an act that was also a parable. He washed the feet of his disciples in order to teach men what it meant for him to become man, to suffer, to die, and to rise again. As our fourth meditation in this series on parables that Jesus told about himself, let us look at this incident of the foot washing and find the lesson that is in it.

It was a solemn occasion of great moment. It was the hour during which our Lord should leave the world in which his Father had placed him for a short lifetime. Now to some extent this leave-taking was a time of rejoicing: soon the imprisonment in flesh and blood would be ended. He, who had had the form of God and had come from God, would soon inhabit heaven again, to dwell in the temple not made with hands. This awakened expectation and joy in his heart. But there was also that in him which made it hard to leave earth. Judas was lost, beyond saving from that heinous net which had snared his will and set him on an irretrievable course that ended in a potter's field. If only he could be saved! And all the others whom he loved "unto the end"—how difficult it was to leave them while they still misunderstood, doubted, boasted, contrived for chief places, and seemed so impotent! Furthermore, the man in him cringed at the thought of the scorn, the scourging, the cross.

These conflicting desires gave way, however, before the duty now confronting him. He must leave them the final example, the one that, if they followed, would ensure the continued preaching of his gospel. He who humiliated his divine glory *enough* by coming to the earth must do the final ignominy, the ultimate baseness, the consummate degradation of washing the feet of his disciples. The Lord of all must become in very fact and deed the slave of all.

Pause, then, before the scene, for your God is on his knees. The One of whom John the Baptist said, "I am not worthy to carry his sandals," is himself removing the shoes of Andrew, of Nathanael, of Philip, of John, of Peter. He is bathing their feet and drying them with his towel. Of all the revelations of God given us in Scripture, is not this the most unbearable? Creator God, whose breath blows life into human clay, whose hand stretches over the deep; wrestling God, who conquers Jacob with a touch; majestic God, who holds back the waters of the sea for his people; God of justice, who thunders on Sinai and the law is brought forth—before these we can stand. But God of the basin and the towel, the slave on his knees—we shudder and shrink in revulsion at the sight! Yet the picture is true. No literary artist conceived it for its effect. It happened. God Almighty laid aside his garments and in the nakedness of a slave knelt before frail and sinful men to do his work.

Why does the picture repel *us*, as it repelled Peter? I suppose partly because we want an abstract God. We say so often we want God to be real, to be personal, to be a friend and a father, but actually we do not want that. To have him around all the time, never for a moment relaxing the rigors of his demands upon us, always holding up those commandments, continually requiring our utmost love—that is more than we can take. So we assign him to a pigeonhole, we make him a category, we retire him to heaven. God in the abstract is much easier to get along with than God in the real.

And the picture of our basin-and-towel God repels us because of what he is doing. In washing the feet of his disciples our Lord is doing in one way what he will do in another way some hours hence. This act is a parable of the crucifixion; some authorities see in the foot washing John's version of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. All three—foot washing, the Supper, the cross—tell us the same thing about God: for our sins he gives himself as the Servant suffering for men.

And we resent it! Like the people the ancient prophet wrote about, we invent all sorts of excuses to make us believe that this is not God doing this thing. "He hath no form nor comeliness; . . . no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected . . . a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: . . . stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." NO! This is not *our* God, bending meekly and holding in his hand the foot of Peter. This is not *our* God, who becomes obedient to the death of the cross.

Why do we resent it? Because an ignoble view of God gives us an ignoble view of man. Exalt God as the highest of being—which, of course, he is—and you can exalt man's noble nature as the image of God in him. But abase God to the form of a servant, and what can you do with man? If man has fallen so low that God must die for him, bearing his sins, what becomes of our pride, our confidence, our courage? They are words only, and empty words at that.

So, with Peter, we say, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." But the God of the basin and the towel warns us that only as we let him die for us can we be saved. Refusing to accept his humiliation in our stead, resolutely closing our eyes so that we shall not see God on his knees before us, we are lost. But comprehend that love enough to accept it, and God will become our Saviour and our Lord.

Then the Lord resumes his position at the table. The garment he removed is put on again, and the place of master that he vacated is reoccupied. In the parable this means that the humiliation of the cross is over, and now "God also hath highly exalted him." From the seat of his authority he instructs his disciples in the significance of what he has done.

This is a most important teaching. It sets before us the ultimate mark of

(Continued on page 43)

The Challenge of UNITY

By James W. Teener

Editor's Note: *In the United States today there are many religious cults which attract people away from traditional Christianity. In some cases they have been won to these cults because the Church, as they know it, has failed them. Herein lies their greatest challenge: Our Church must be more faithful in its pastoral ministry and more earnest in its educational work among adults if it is to combat these strange doctrines. The study courses in this magazine are a means toward that end. We feel, however, that in addition to lessons on the Christian faith and work, we should, from time to time, examine some of the doctrines that are put forth in the name of Christianity, or as a substitute for it, in order to be aware of their propaganda when it comes into our communities and our homes.*

Dr. James W. Teener is well qualified to examine Unity for us. A former professor at Park College (Missouri), his Ph.D. thesis, submitted to the University of Chicago, was on the doctrines of the Unity School of Christianity. He is now general presbyter for Kansas City Presbytery.

UNITY, like Christian Science, was the inspiration of a woman. Myrtle Fillmore, reared a Methodist, by profession a public-school teacher, was early influenced by New England transcendentalism. Before Unity was thought of, she named her two sons Lowell and Waldo. She settled in Kansas City, with her husband Charles, in 1884. In 1887 Christian Science came to Kansas City, and the Fillmores, both complaining of physical infirmities, attended its first class session. Myrtle was immediately won, but Charles, who for twenty years had "dabbled"[1] in spiritualism, did not become a convert until 1890.

Modern Thought, April, 1889, their first magazine, was "devoted to the spiritualization of humanity from an independent standpoint." And Charles editorialized that it "took the best from all religions." But in 1890 the little paper became *Christian Science Thought.* Mrs. Eddy objected to their use of the name, and a year later the title was changed to *Thought.* In 1895 the name *Unity* was permanently assumed to indicate their responsiveness to the best in all faiths. These positive reactions are apparent in the pages of the magazine. After 1890 the Fillmores moved into the Quimby-Evans orbit of the mental-cure cult and continued so until they finally withdrew from the International New Thought Alliance in 1922. At the Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893, they had met Swami Vivekananda, of India, who later was a founder of yogism in America. They had become his publishers and had absorbed many of his ideas. Charles had also read much in Theosophy and had followed the lead of John Hamlin Dewey in writing his *Twelve Powers of Man.* Then, but more and more, the two, trying to deepen the religious base of their movement, moved from the pure thought and mental-cure approach. The results of this synthesis of ideas they termed "Practical Christianity." It is largely an attempt to present the philosophy of the East under Christian symbols.

How Unity Grew

Unity began when Myrtle Fillmore was cured of what she diagnosed as tuberculosis. She decided to share her experience, and so gathered about her a small group of friends who were having similar experiences to testify to one another and "to radiate . . . the love principle as taught by Christ." In 1890 this became a daily occurrence, and prayers went out for those who were in "trouble, sickness, and poverty" and who were "so dominated by the surrounding error" that they needed others' help. This was the start of The Society of Silent Help, later Silent Unity. This silent and absent healing agency became the most important in Unity and also the most productive financially. Through it wealth has come. As need arose, other organizations were set up—the Unity Tract Society, the Unity Correspondence School, the Silent-70, and the Unity Pure Food Company. All were consolidated into the corporation, Unity School of Christianity, in 1914. The founders and their two living sons became the trustees, with power to operate the business, determine their own compensation, and appoint their successors.

The Fillmores did not start out to develop a sect or

[1] All quotations are from the writings of Charles Fillmore and are used by permission.

denomination. They have insisted that they merely had an "independent educational institution teaching the use of the Jesus Christ doctrine in everyday life." Nevertheless, their activity has been an increasing renunciation of this avowed purpose. Very early they developed their own Sunday school and worship services, putting them at the same time as the established denominational meetings. How, then, could their students be faithful to their individual churches? In 1903 Unity made provision for an ordained ministry. Also they urged the "faithful" to establish "Centers" (Unity's name for local churches) in other cities, and in 1918 they formed Unity Field Department, to bind together and direct the activities of these groups. In 1921 a Statement of Faith was adopted, and three years later Mr. Fillmore announced the organization of Unity Church Universal. This was not well received, and very soon Unity Annual Conference took its place. The Conference now functions as a denominational governing body, ordaining ministers and annually determining their standing. All centers must make yearly reports, sell only Unity-approved literature, and use only Unity speakers.

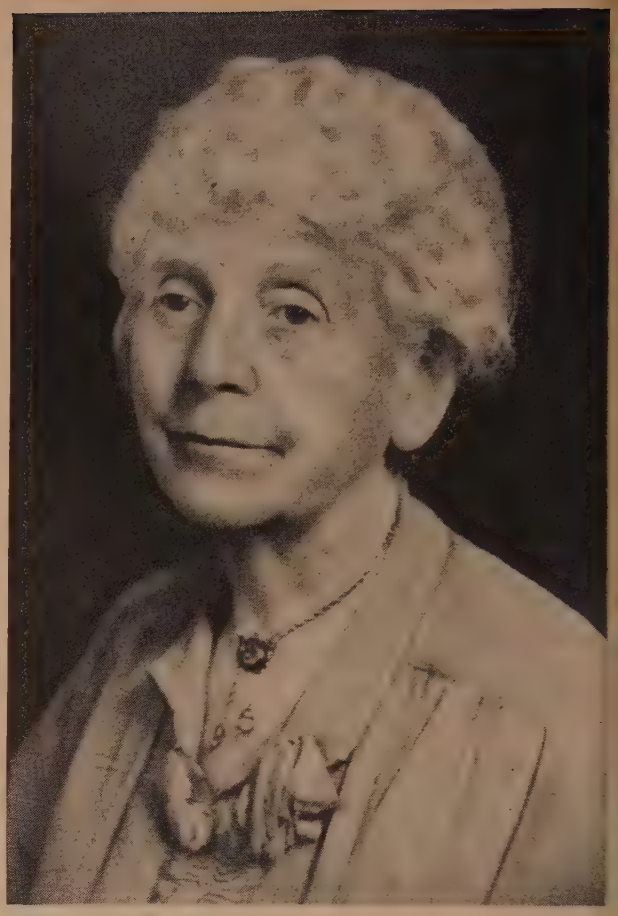
Unity centers are neither numerous nor large. Unity's chief influence is through Silent Unity and its publications. Still basic is *Unity*, a monthly. Best sellers are *Weekly Unity*, *Wee Wisdom*—for children, and *Unity Daily Word*—a devotional magazine. *Good Business*—for men, and *Progress*—for youth, have not been so successful. A multitude of tracts have gone out, and more recently, a number of books. A short while ago about forty per cent of their magazines were sent as gifts, being paid for by the members, who were encouraged to make use of Good-Words' boxes to this end. This has constituted Unity's missionary program, and it has circled the globe.

What Unity Teaches

Unity claims to make Christianity practical in a way that the established Churches have not. It does this through its teachings and its methods of application. Because of its claims to be New Testament Christianity, it is necessary to examine Unity's approach to the Bible. Charles Fillmore was an intuitionalist. He said:

"You may know by simply holding that you know. . . . Do not act until you get the assurance. . . . Will it come by voice? No! You will *know* through the faculty of intuition."

Although he frequently adopted scientific names, he classed science as "constantly shifting opinions" that it was foolish to try to store up. Intuition enables one to "instantly . . . draw forth anything he may wish to know." Likewise, the Bible is not to be interpreted by recognized historical methods, but by intuition. Actually, the process, applied in their *Metaphysical Bible Dictionary*, is allegorization. This method was made classic by Origen and followed by both Swedenborg and Mary Baker Eddy. Because it is wholly dependent on individual whim, lacking any intellectual controls, it has enabled Unity to interpret the simplest Biblical statements in terms of the mystical systems of Hinduism and its dependents, Theosophy and New Thought. Let us look at a few of the interpretations of Unity:



MYRTLE FILLMORE, cofounder of the Unity School of Christianity, one of the American cults whose strange doctrines constitute a challenge to the faith of the Church.

God. Unity followed Mrs. Eddy's definition of God as "Mind, Intelligence, Life, Love, Spirit." It uses personal language to give warmth to the God-idea but insists that "to think of God as a person limits God." There is no self-consciousness in God. "God is not a . . . person having life, intelligence, power." God is a power to be used. Self-consciousness is an achievement of God-power only at the human level. The Christian Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is actually "Mind, idea, and expression." "Man is the individualized expression of God-Mind." Charles Fillmore says, "The Trinity—Mind, idea, and expression—has become Elohim, Jehovah, and Adam. Adam is the third in the godhead."

Man. Man, as third in the Trinity, is also triune—superconsciousness, consciousness, and subconsciousness. This expresses itself as Spirit, soul, and body. "Man is omnipotent Spirit. He expresses himself through soul, which makes a dwelling called body."

His chief end is the "self-conscious evolution of being." Man forms his own consciousness from the elements of God."

Sin. What orthodoxy calls sin is unknown to Unity. Man did have a "fall." He failed to lift his conscious mind to Christ, his superconscious mind, at the top of his head. Instead, he let his conscious mind descend to the subconscious mind and indulged in "blind experimentation" in sensation, namely, in the "misuse of the sex function." All the ills of the flesh are due to this perversion of God-life. As a result man now has a gross, fleshly body formed by "error-thought." This body is in bondage to fear, jealousy, hate, poverty, death. Also the race has created by thought a realm of evil illustrated by such things as droughts, floods, and cyclones. Perpetuated by each generation, this is crystallized about the individual, subjecting him to bondage of mortal beliefs.

Salvation. Unity is not interested in some future heaven where "saints immortal reign." "Unity teaches that the eternal life taught and demonstrated by Jesus is not gained by dying, but by refining the body until it becomes the undying habitation of the soul." Unity teaches body-salvation here and now. The process of evil must be reversed. The subconscious mind must be brought up by the conscious mind to be reunited to the superconscious or Christ-mind. And each must do it for himself.

What, then, of the atonement? Unity teaches that there is no need for this, since there is no sin against a personal God but only a failure of the self to realize possibilities. Man is anemic, not immoral. "Error mentality envelops the human race like a smoky fog." True, Jesus is helpful. It was necessary for "some great soul to reconnect us with the Father-Mind." Jesus is such a soul, perfected in a previous incarnation. Jesus had been on the earth as Moses, David, Elijah, and as other incarnations. He, in his body, reversed the evil process and "made a great rent in the sense-consciousness," breaking "through the crystallized thought strata" that holds the race in bondage. Thus he became the "Way-Shower." But he did more. He put to death the "Judas [sex] consciousness" of the race. "In doing this, he passed through great suffering and seemed to die." "Christ was not killed on the cross, nor was the body of Jesus destroyed." . . . "Instead, he transmuted his body into a higher spiritual substance." In the resurrection Jesus "atomized his body into the racial atmosphere." So Jesus "offered his body as a life or electric transformer" for the race.

Method of Salvation. Since salvation is self-realization, Unity proposes four steps:

1. Practice the "Silence," seeking thereby to free the self from sense-consciousness and to realize Divinity or superconsciousness.

2. Practice "Denial." Cleanse the self from temporary manifestations of evil and false belief. Deny them away. Repudiate physical, mental, and financial trouble.

3. Practice "Affirmation." Call the cells of the body and mind, cleansed of error by "Denial," to their true task. Get the "I can" habit. "You can praise yourself from weakness to strength, from ignorance to intelligence, from poverty to affluence, from sickness to health."

4. The individual must also add two personal habits if he would complete the regenerative process in this incarnation—he must be absolutely continent and he must become a vegetarian. No doubt, since the death of Charles Fillmore, these will not receive the emphasis he gave them.

There is no hell for those who fail to follow the above path to body renewal. If physical death overtakes the individual, the law of Being works for the soul's re-embodiment. In God's love reincarnation takes place, and man is given a second chance or as many as are necessary to complete the process. Thus Unity tends to a universal salvation.

Unity's strength does not lie in its theology. It is more effective than most of the mental cure agencies, because it has added religious motivation and warmth to mental and emotional guidance. Added to this is the personal interest it offers to those who approach it. People are assured that Silent Unity operates twenty-four hours a day. There is always someone in the prayer room. Letters and telegrams asking help are promptly answered. Unity is also more easily understood by the average person than Christian Science, because it does not deny the reality of the material world with its ills, but rather insists that it has discovered a method for overcoming sickness, poverty, family troubles, death. God is always accessible. "God is your highest self and is constantly waiting upon you." This is also the weakness of Unity, for in experience we discover that our "highest self" is still far short of the glory of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Religion on Stage

(Continued from page 4)

Beam, or *Judge Not. Death of a Salesman* may be said to have been religious in a negative way, since it exposed with powerful insistence the emptiness of many modern aspirations and values. The astounding success of *The Cocktail Party* appears to demonstrate that people are interested in drama which presents human problems as basically religious.

Great drama must be religious, for great drama deals with the basic themes, asks the hardest questions, probes deep into the human heart, and ponders the meaning of life here and hereafter. Drama is the art by which the deep meanings of what people are and do is brought to life upon the stage. Religion is the great creative power from which springs all that gives that life its meaning. Therefore, the two have a natural affinity and a compulsion which unites them, so that drama at its best may be an art used to the glory of God.

Unit I

James Views the Gospel

Four Lessons on the Epistle of James

By John von Rohr

1

HEARING THE WORD—AND DOING IT

Read *James 1: 1 to 2: 13.*

Not long ago a young man told his minister that he was hostile to Christianity. Concerned, the minister pressed the man further to discover the reasons for this judgment. "Is it because Christians believe in justice toward all peoples, the elimination of prejudice and discrimination against minority groups?" he asked. "No," was the quick reply. "Is it, then, because Christians believe in love—not only for their friends, but also for their enemies?" he continued. "No," was again the answer. There was a long silence, both men engaged in thought, when suddenly the young man spoke up. "What I really object to about Christians," he said, "is not that they are Christians, but that they are not Christian enough."

This young man put his finger on a problem that is by no means new and that, indeed, greatly disturbed the writer of the New Testament letter of James about nineteen centuries ago. For the letter of James, which we are to be studying this month, deals with the problem of Christians who are "not Christian enough."

James discusses many aspects of this problem, for we avoid our full Christian responsibility in a variety of ways. How easy it is to find "ways out" from the duties of Christian living! How easy it is to construct excuses that will relieve us of the burdens of Christian behavior! The temptations to unchristian activity are legion, and often not only the flesh, but also the spirit, is weak. And James, with large insight and compelling power, cautions his readers against such defections. We shall look at some of his cautions and counsel in these four lessons, and we begin with these words: "Be doers of the word, and not hearers only" (*ch. 1: 22*).[1] What advice is James giving us here?

Our Conduct and Our Faith

James is warning his readers, as William Gladstone once put it, "not to let their religion spoil their morality." There are two dangers here. Not only is it possible for religion to spoil morality, but also for morality to spoil religion. Some people maintain, for example, that the moral life does not need to have religious foundations. Belief in God, attention to his Word, drawing upon his power, are not necessary for good living. Rather, the life of morality, according to this point of view, is independent and self-supporting; it comes out of a natural goodness that men possess; it does not rest upon either divine sanctions or divine power. This opinion says: "We can be good without being religious. Indeed, being religious is a hindrance to being good, for religion deceives us and keeps us from recognizing and expressing the goodness that we have naturally within us. Therefore, let us forget about religion and concentrate on morality."

From the standpoint of the Christian faith this point of view is unrealistic and unsound. The Christian faith maintains that men are not naturally good, in spite of the potential for goodness that human life does contain; nor are men able to discover by themselves alone the full nature of goodness, in spite of all the wisdom that the human mind does possess. Rather, says Christianity, our knowledge of goodness in the highest sense comes to us as a revelation from God, and our power for goodness in the fullest measure comes to us as a gift from God. Thus religion *is* necessary for morality,

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[1] All quotations from the New Testament in this study section are from the Revised Standard Version unless otherwise indicated.

and to think of moral behavior as self-sufficient, is to let our morality spoil our religion.

But just as a wrong view of morality can spoil religion, so, too, a wrong view of religion can spoil morality. This is the mistake which James was concerned about when he wrote, "Be doers of the word, and not hearers only." If the first mistaken relationship says, "It is enough to be moral; there is no need to be religious," the second says, "It is enough to be religious; there is no need to be moral"; and against this James raised his voice in exhortation and in protest. His protest, of course, was against a wrong kind of religion; for a right religion is productive of moral insight, concern, and behavior.

"Be doers of the word, and not hearers only." James is saying that religion is inadequate when it does not penetrate deeply and touch the whole of a man's life. It is inadequate when it does not capture a man's whole being and become a persistent motivating force in his behavior. It is inadequate when it is expressed only in polite ideas and fails to be put into vigorous practice. Note the unusually compelling way in which James phrases this whole matter: "If any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who observes his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But he who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer that forgets but a doer that acts, he shall be blessed in his doing" (*ch. 1: 23-25*).

Hearing the Word

How do we hear the Word of God? In other words, what does the Bible mean to us? There are those who look upon it in a mechanical, almost a magical, manner. The Bible for them is a holy possession of the Church and of the individual, which he respects because of its sacred character. If he respects it properly, it may bring benefit, perhaps even miraculous benefit, to him. Yet the Bible, the Word, has no persistent and continuing bearing upon the actions of his daily life. In a sense, this view of the Bible is the Protestant counterpart to the Roman Catholic idea of relics. For as the Roman Catholic Church venerates and enshrines bones of the saints, so some Protestants put the Bible under glass and honor it as a closed book.

This static view of the Scriptures has expressed itself in different ways. There have been some who have looked upon the Bible as a sort of talisman which would bring good luck simply by virtue of the fact that it was carried about on one's person, whether or not it was read. There have been others who have believed that its presence would keep trouble out of the home, even though it was simply gathering dust on the shelves. But more important than these are still others who honor the Bible by reading it or hearing it read, but then consider that their respects have been fully paid and proceed to put it from their minds until the next time of reading comes around. Such persons, says James, are "hearers only." Thus, those who adhere to this mechanical and static view of the Bible are like the man "who observes his natural face in a mirror; . . . and goes away and at once forgets" (*ch. 1: 23, 24*). Their religion spoils their morality because they fail to interpret religion as relevant to the many areas of daily life, where moral decisions need to be made and moral actions need to take place.

On the other hand, however, there is also a second view of the Bible suggested by James's statement. It might be called a dynamic view. Its essence is that the Bible is not dead words to be venerated, but a living voice to be acknowledged; not a silent object to be respected, but a divine speaking to be heard and acted upon in every moment of human living. This view does not say simply that God *came* to men, but also that he *comes* to men and does so continuously through his living Word. He comes to men with his judgments upon human sinfulness—judgments that call for the response of continuous repentance. He comes to men with his promises of forgiveness—promises that call for the response of unending trust in divine mercy. He comes to men with his claims upon them for moral goodness—claims that call for the response of persistent obedience. God is thus not only of the past, but also of the present; and the Bible is not simply a record of history, but a living voice speaking constantly to the contemporary world. And as it speaks, it calls upon men not only to hear, but also to do, and it points the way to the power through which the doing can be most fully accomplished. Then religion, rather than spoiling morality, can produce morality; for those who respond become "doers of the word, and not hearers only."

This insistent requirement came to James (and comes to us) from our Lord himself. For Jesus mere ideas or ideals were not enough. They must also be translated into the actual circumstances of moral living. Recall a conversation that Christ had with one of the expounders of the Jewish law: "And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? How do you read?' And he answered, 'You shall love the Lord your

What to Look for in This Lesson

1. Can people have strong ethics without a religious faith?
2. Describe the "static" and the "dynamic" view of Scripture.
3. How do anger, a quick temper, catering to people of wealth and influence, show "double-mindedness"?
4. Can you think of any teachings of Jesus in addition to those given in this lesson which deal with the same matters that James deals with in his first chapter?

God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.' And he said to him, 'You have answered right; do this, and you will live'" (*Luke 10: 25-28*). Jesus' reply was not "Hear this, and you will live," or even "Believe this, and you will live." Rather, the emphasis was upon *doing* the word. And when the lawyer persisted in his questioning, the stress was the same. For in answer to his continuing query, Jesus told the parable of the Samaritan who ministered with compassion and kindness to a man beaten, robbed, and left half-dead by a group of thieves, and his conclusion was, "Go and do likewise." James and Jesus had the same concern.

But James, as well as Jesus, knew that this was easier said than done. Knowledge does not necessarily lead to virtue. Just being aware of an obligation does not automatically bring about its fulfillment. Why is this? James tells us it is because of our "double-mindedness." (*James 4: 8.*) We try to go in two directions at one time. As Jesus himself warned us: "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon" (*Matt. 6: 24*).

It is one of the great values of the letter of James that he exposes our "double-mindedness" in many of its varied forms. Note especially some of the examples that appear in the reading for this lesson. There is, first, the Christian who gets angry. But anger reflects self-interest rather than concern for God. Thus, says James, "the anger of man does not work the righteousness of God" (*James 1: 20*). Or again, there is the Christian who does not control his speech. But such lack of control is in conflict with a deep religious loyalty. Thus, says James, "If any one thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this man's religion is vain" (*v. 26*). And still again, there is the Christian who shows favoritism for the rich over the poor. But such favoritism is really self-love rather than love for God. Thus, says James, "If you show partiality, you commit sin" (*ch. 2: 9*).

So the message of James lays bare the need that every Christian faces—the need for a loyalty to God that overrules in all areas of behavior a selfish devotion to one's self. It is the need for developing a religion that does not spoil, but produces morality. It is the need for becoming a doer of the word, rather than a hearer only, by letting God's Word speak to us as a living voice, relevant to every aspect of our lives. It is the need for becoming not only Christian, but "Christian enough."

2

PROFESSING A FAITH—AND LIVING BY IT

Read *James 2: 14-26.*

A FAMOUS actor, a man who professed a religious belief but who led a dissolute life, was asked one evening to read to a group of friends the Twenty-third Psalm. He did so in a most effective fashion. His voice was deep and resonant. His phrasing was accurate. His enunciation was precise. It was clearly a performance of professional quality, and those present were moved by its beauty. The next day, however, the actor and a friend of the evening before attended a church service where a quite different reading of the same psalm was heard. The reader this time was the church's minister, a man of saintly life but also of advanced years and broken voice. Thus, though the psalm was read with sincerity and humility and was permeated throughout with the mood of deep faith, it failed to be pleasing to the ear. The tonal quality of the reading was poor, and it lacked the smoothness that could give the psalm beauty and attractiveness. When the service was over and the two were leaving the church, the friend turned to the actor and said, "My, how much more beautifully you read the psalm last evening than did that man today!" The actor was silent a moment. Then he answered: "More beautifully? No. I only knew the Shepherd's Psalm. But that man knew the Shepherd." He knew the difference!

This little incident sets in sharp contrast two diverse types of religious faith. On the one hand, there is that faith which is entirely a faith of the mind. This kind of faith lays hold of the *ideas* of religion. It says, "I believe certain propositions to be true." But it does not go beyond the range of intellectual conviction; it does not penetrate into the more basic spiritual and moral aspects of human life. A man with this kind of faith says with strong conviction, "I believe in God"; yet he lives as if this affirmation were quite unrelated to the moral decisions that he must make day by day. This kind of believing has often been characterized as the profession of a "dead creed." Actually, however, it is not necessarily the creed that is dead, but rather the profession of it. A creed—a statement of religious faith—may contain living and relevant words, powerful and significant affirmations; but if the profession of that creed is purely an intellectual matter, limited to the convictions of the mind, then stagnation easily sets in, and the very words of life lose their vitality and their power. This is the faith of one who only "knows the Shepherd's Psalm" and whose life is not moved by that knowledge.

On the other hand, there is a more penetrating and significant type of religious faith. It is a faith that

does not stop with assertions of the mind but moves on also to capture the emotions and the will. It is a faith that becomes the response of the whole man. It is thus a faith that is more than mere belief, for involved in it are also trust and action. When faith is of this sort, religion becomes both a more inward and a more outward matter. It becomes more inward in the sense that it claims a man's being—his feelings, his attitudes, his loyalties. And the religious faith becomes more outward in the sense that it achieves a new relationship to the man's behavior, finding expression in his everyday actions. Or let us put it this way: Religion that claims the will as well as the mind becomes more inward, for the believer has come not only to believe in God but also to trust him and to love him. And it becomes more outward because such trust and love are expressed in acts of obedience in outer life.

Now, it is the distinction between these two types of faith which James is concerned about in that section of his letter assigned to today's lesson. Last week we saw the contrast he set up between a static and a dynamic attitude toward the Word of God—between hearing the Word and doing it. This week his contrast shows the difference between merely subscribing to a creed and living by it.

It is possible, says James, for a man simply to believe something and not have it affect his life. But if his faith is of this sort, then it has no saving power. Faith alone is not enough. It must be "completed by works" (*ch. 2: 22*), for "as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so faith apart from works is dead" (*v. 26*). What good is it, he asks, if one simply says to a hungry and ill-clad person, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled" (*v. 16*)? There is something missing here if that is as far as one's religion will carry him. Religious faith, if it is real, expresses itself not only in well-wishing, but also in sacrificial and compassionate behavior.

Paul and James Teach About Faith

It is important to note here that James is stressing in this passage a concern similar to that of Paul, who had written not long before him. Paul taught that *faith* was a basic essential of the Christian life. The whole of the response of the Christian to God was caught up for him in that one word. It is not possible, Paul felt, for a man to find a proper relationship to God apart from faith, for his sinful nature prevents him from earning a place of favor in God's sight. Profoundly realistic in his appraisal of human nature, Paul knew that man was essentially self-centered in character, with a conceit so strong that it could never be fully overcome through human strength. The "lusts of the flesh," meaning for Paul all the selfish inclinations and urges that fill the human heart, were passions of great power. And so man cannot earn his way to God. Rather, even in his noblest moral achievements, he stands before God as a sinner, and thus is subject to condemnation. The perfection that God requires is too high and the efforts of men are too inadequate for the claim ever to be made that God owes to men his favor and reward. Thus, the Christian message, according to Paul, confronts one with the fact of divine judgment.

What to Look for in This Lesson

1. Describe the two kinds of faith discussed in this lesson.
2. What does faith mean to Paul, and how does he agree with James's teaching of the matter?
3. Can you think of instances where right belief has been made a substitute for constructive social action?

But even more, it brings to one the promise of divine mercy, for the whole burden of Paul's preaching and writing is that "God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (*Rom. 5: 8*). A right relationship with God is possible because God's mercy is real. It is he who comes to us and draws us with love into fellowship with himself, pardoning our iniquities and forgiving our sins. And that fellowship of forgiveness, says Paul, we realize through faith, for it is in the act of trustful dependence upon God's mercy that we are enabled to receive this freely bestowed and wholly undeserved love. Thus faith, for Paul, becomes a basic essential in the life of any who would enter into a proper relationship with God.

There is, however, still a further word that Paul has to say about faith, and it is here that his agreement with James is seen most clearly. For faith, when it is real, also enables us to enter into a proper relationship with our fellow men. This is to say that faith, in Paul's judgment, is not sterile. Rather, it is a motivating force for moral behavior. It is the door to new and better life. Paul puts this whole matter in terms of the "Spirit," for, as in faith we receive the forgiveness of God, so too in faith we are laid hold by the Holy Spirit, filled with his goodness and strengthened by his power. Love and goodness can now become greater realities in daily living, for "it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (*Gal. 2: 20*). This means that faith then shows itself in moral action, for the "fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (*ch. 5: 22, 23*). Thus Paul, like James, would readily say that faith is "completed by works."

But note now the type of faith of which Paul has been speaking. It is not simply an intellectual faith, a faith that merely assents to certain doctrines, or merely affirms certain beliefs to be true. Rather, it is a believing faith and a trusting faith, a faith that comes from both the top of the mind and the bottom of the heart. It is a faith that involves not only belief in God but also a commitment of the whole of

being to him, a laying of oneself in his hands in the mood of humble dependence and confident devotion. Thus, we are led again to the distinction, with which we began, between a faith that is vital and one that is not. Faith that is vital comes not only from the head but also from the heart.

What Makes Faith Vital?

Let us examine this point more closely, for it is a crucial matter. What is there about a trusting faith which gives it more vitality and dynamic for moral living than is to be found in a faith limited to intellectual belief? In his book, *The Divine-Human Encounter,* Emil Brunner has made some pertinent observations on this matter.

In the first place, says Professor Brunner, mere belief simply places ideas at my disposal, whereas a relationship to God resting upon trustful dependence places myself at his disposal. This is a distinction of greatest importance for practical living. When one simply has new ideas, he can become just another tool in the service of old attitudes and passions. Even religious ideas, unfortunately, can be of this sort, as the history of religion has amply shown. For religious beliefs, dogmatically held, can become another occasion for the expressing of prejudice, discrimination, and lack of love. They can even intensify the normal aggressiveness of men, and be maintained against opposing viewpoints with special zeal and particular ardor. Thus religious ideas can become not only an instrument of one's pride, but also a cause for new pridefulness if they are simply ideas grasped by the mind. But a faith of the heart as well as the mind alters this situation. It does so by placing *me* rather than my ideas at the disposal of God. For when faith is trust, it places a person in a relation of commitment to God, to be used by him for the doing of his will. This leaves no room for prejudice, discrimination, or lack of love, but only for carrying faith to its necessary completion in moral behavior.

Professor Brunner then observes that the commitment of the heart produces a transformation of my entire life. A faith that lays hold of ideas may be an enriching thing in that it contributes to my knowledge. But if it is just a profession of ideas and nothing more, then it has not altered the basic nature of my personality. I am still self-centered and selfish. But the faith of commitment cuts deeper, for it deals with the core of my being. As an act of trust in God, it places me in dependence upon him and thus becomes the means for shaping my life in accordance with his purposes. Confronting God himself, rather than just an idea about him, through this response of trust, I am re-created in that relationship and made from a lord who views selfishly all he surveys into a servant whose passion is love.

What Kind of Faith Do You Have?

Returning to James, we conclude that he was concerned about the type of faith that men held. James did not ignore faith or even minimize its importance. But he wanted to be sure that it was a faith of the right kind. It must be the kind of faith that makes a difference in human living. It must be a faith that cuts across men's callousness and indifference and leads them to actions of sympathy and compassion. It must be a faith that lifts men out of their selfishness and inspires them to give of themselves in love. No other faith would suffice, for only that faith is real which gives birth to moral behavior. In James's understanding there is no hiding behind orthodoxy of belief in order to escape the exacting responsibilities of the moral life. He who feels that his work is done when he believes aright is deceiving himself, for right action as well as right belief is an essential of Christian living. It is always a temptation for men to take the easy way out. They are able to be undisturbed in conscience because they limit Christianity to a credal profession. "Believe this and you are saved," they say, asking no questions about the outgrowth of the belief. But James warns us, "Faith apart from works is dead," and these words are wholly in accord with the spirit of Jesus himself, who proclaimed, "You will know them by their fruits" (*Matt. 7: 20*).

3

LONGING FOR PEACE—AND PROMOTING IT

Read *James 3: 1 to 4: 3.*

IT HAS been estimated by a modern historian that in the last three thousand years of human history there have been less than three hundred years in which the whole world has been at peace. At some time or other in more than two thousand seven hundred of those years, there has been armed conflict between tribes or between nations to mar the peace of the earth.

And yet it has been man's desire throughout the ages that war be abolished and a lasting peace attained. One finds, certainly, a praising of peace and a hope for its attainment running all through the Biblical literature: "And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (*Isa. 2: 4; Micah 4: 3*); "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth peace" (*Isa. 52: 7*); "In his days shall the

righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth" (*Ps. 72: 7*).[1] Or still again in the words of Jesus: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (*Matt. 5: 9*).

And how strongly we still share that desire today! In an age that has not much outgrown the brutalities of the past but that has progressed far in the invention of new ways by which that brutality can be expressed, must men still long intensely that peacemakers may come to the fore and that the good tidings of lasting peace be proclaimed. Indeed, in our time of weapons that wipe whole peoples from the face of the earth, this longing for peace has been lifted into the area of necessity. The very survival of our civilization depends on nations' learning to put up their swords and their spears and to make of them instruments for human welfare rather than for destruction.

But which way lies enduring peace? One answer that our generation has learned is that such peace can come only through some effective form of organization on an international basis. The days of absolute national sovereignty and of unrestrained power politics must end if we are ever to have a peace of lasting character. The world is now just too small for that. We must move out beyond the old lines of division and advance into more co-operative unity wherever advance can be made.

We Must Be People of Peace

Yet, important as this is, there is still another lesson pertaining to peace that our generation has not learned and that, in a sense, is even more basic than an effective world organization. That is the lesson of the inner attitude which makes for peace; for, as water can flow no higher than its source, so too any organization can rise no higher than the spirit upon which it is built. The political agencies of men rest upon the moral or immoral spirit and convictions of the people. The people must therefore desire peace, "seek peace, and pursue it," if the nation is to have peace in its relationships with the rest of the world.

But this is nothing new. It is, indeed, a matter that James emphasized about nineteen hundred years ago and that forms a main consideration in that portion of his letter assigned for today's study and discussion. "What causes wars, and what causes fightings among you?" he asks. "Is it not your passions that are at war in your members? You desire and do not have; so you kill. And you covet and cannot obtain; so you fight and wage war." (*James 4: 1, 2.*) The conflict of men comes from the unbridled nature of human passions, that is, from the fact that even those who presumably want peace live in such a way as to promote discord and strife. But peace cannot come among men in this way. Rather, says James, it can come only when men know a higher wisdom from above, a wisdom that will lead to substituting moral virtue for those acts of passion which make for conflict. "For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty or insincerity. And the harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." (*Ch. 3: 16-18.*) Rather than promoting discord, men must live earnestly in such a way as to promote peace, if peace is to be obtained. And this is a task for every man.

Let us then examine this question in its religious setting and ask: "What kind of people are needed for a peaceful world? What is the life that can contribute in our day to the establishment of enduring peaceful relationships?" Undoubtedly, there are many answers that can be given to these questions. But certain ones seem to stand out as most important.

Renouncing Selfish Ambition

In the first place, men and women are needed who will repudiate the selfish premises upon which our modern civilization has been built and who will seek to use their lives, therefore, not so much for themselves as for their fellow men. This is a renunciation of the "selfish ambition" which James speaks of as leading to disorder.

British poster by Fougasse. Collection Museum of Modern Art

Wartime gives special urgency to James's advice about control of the tongue. This is one of many posters used in England during World War II to stress this matter.

[1] All quotations from the Old Testament in this study section are from the King James Version unless otherwise indicated.

When we examine the foundations of our contemporary American civilization, we find cause for considerable concern. Many of the noble principles of our forefathers have been quite transformed in the modern day. The founders of this nation were committed to freedom, religious liberty, and the rights of the individual. But unhappily we have, in certain measure, abused these high ideals. Freedom, for many, has come to mean freedom from all restraint and has degenerated into license. Religious liberty, for many, has come to mean the liberty not to be religious and has degenerated into religious indifference. The rights of the individual have been asserted by many to the point where they are divorced from responsibility and so have degenerated into selfishness and into a frantic search for pleasure and material gain.

And that, in itself, contains the seeds of strife, for one cannot build a peaceful and orderly world upon selfishness, lack of responsibility, or indifference to religious and ethical values. One might liken the construction of a peaceful civilization to the erection of a building made of brick, noting that the structure can be completed only as the proper building materials are available for use. But the building materials for any set of peaceful relationships are the bricks of human decency, concern for others, sympathy, understanding, and good will. And for building a peaceful world these attitudes must be practiced not only by political leaders but also by millions of others whose names are never widely known but who through their concerted actions set the tone for national behavior. Thus, where the building blocks of a civilization deal primarily with material rather than with spiritual values, where chief emphasis is placed upon social success and personal pleasure, where selfishness is the ruling instinct molding behavior, and where religion and morality are discounted or thrown into discard altogether, then the possibilities of attaining a goal of lasting harmony and concord are small indeed. One cannot have a peaceful civilization unless one has the proper bricks with which to build it. So, in ever larger numbers, men and women are needed who will renounce in our day the fulfillment of selfish ambition as life's primary goal, who will give themselves to a more important job than simply playing the game of getting ahead in financial and social status, and who thus will contribute in their own way to eliminating what James and all history have unhappily known as the "wars and contentions" among us.

Pursuing Righteousness

A second prerequisite for the establishment of true peace among men is that we seek after righteousness, for discord and strife thrive upon prejudice, discrimination, and unrighteous dealings. The companionship of peace with righteousness was described by the psalmist in incomparable words when he said, "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (*Ps. 85: 10*). And James likewise notes this relationship when he declares, "The harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace" (*James 3: 18*).

Of course, this is obvious to us today. We have come to know acutely in our generation consequences of discrimination and exploitation. We have seen in some of the tensions and the carnage of our time the fruits of decades and even centuries of unrighteous behavior. This has been true in both national and international life, and through it all we have come to realize that there can be no harmony among men where minority groups are made the objects of discrimination, where men are denied their God-given political, economic, and religious rights, and where whole nations suffer under an imperialist control that concerns itself more with the process of exploitation than with stimulating growth to maturity. We have surely learned over recent decades the abstract lesson that the fruit of unrighteousness is strife.

But the task of our day is now to render that abstract knowledge concrete in all areas of human relationships. That is no easy or automatic task. For an application of this knowledge means forsaking our racial and national prejudices and relinquishing those privileges and advantages which inevitably accompany the role of the discriminator. It is, in other words, a costly thing (in terms of both personal pride and material gain) to be concerned about the establishment of righteousness. This is all the more reason why men and women are needed who find in this concern one of their primary passions, men and women who are moved by a zeal for the victory of righteousness in human affairs. The necessity in our day is not so much for persons who will simply nod in agreement to the proposition that "all men are created equal," but more for those who will take that proposition seriously and, even at some personal cost, seek

What to Look for in This Lesson

1. Can a world peace organization be effective if the people of the world do not desire peace? What nation today, in your opinion, most desires peace? What sacrifices must any nation make if it is to have peace in the world today?

2. How are the world tensions and conflict seen on a small scale in our own homes and communities? (See *James 3: 6-12*.)

3. If it is true that people who want peace must first renounce selfish ambition, how does this apply to the nation?

4. Think of ways in which it is costly (*a*) for the individual and (*b*) for the nation to be concerned about righteousness.

5. What does it mean to say that Christianity is pessimistic about man but optimistic about God?

give it vivid expression by equalizing the opportunities for all individuals throughout the whole fabric of national and international life.

Peace Comes from God

But those people who work for peace must find in God the source of their inspiration and power for peaceful living. James also notes this fact and makes a basic element in his message, for the wisdom that can lead to peace is a "wisdom from above" (*ch. 3: 17*). The frailties of humanity, as they express themselves in confusion and selfishness, are hindrances rather than helps to peaceful relationships. They therefore need to be transmuted into greater wisdom and moral strength through a dependence upon Him who alone is able to provide fully for men's needs. This leads, of course, to the very core of the Christian faith; for Christianity, pessimistic about man, is optimistic about God and places its trust in him as One who is able to conquer the forces of evil, inspire men toward goodness, and empower them to live in the ways of harmony and peace.

It is at this point that Christianity speaks out with vigor against the mood of humanistic self-sufficiency which has come, all too much, to characterize our time. Christianity holds it to be delusion to say that men, of their own strength, can so perfect themselves as to construct the good society.

The goal of the good society, Christianity would say, is admirable; we all ought to seek it. But our faith tells us that this goal cannot be reached simply through human power that fails to take into account the strength and persistence of human evil. It is arrogant to attribute to humanity a possibility for virtue that man does not actually possess. Rather, the words of the ancient psalmist still have meaning for the Christian faith: "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it" (*Ps. 127: 1*), and the words of Jesus: "There is none good but one, that is, God" (*Matt. 19: 17*, K.J.V.). Thus, for our day, men and women are needed who will also draw upon the "wisdom from above," and then, in that reliance upon God and his goodness, the Christian can make his contribution to the promoting of peace among men.

4

DRAWING NEAR TO GOD—AND GIVING EVIDENCE OF IT

Read *James 4: 4 to 5: 20.*

SOMEONE has said that the task of Christian preaching is to comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comfortable.

James would have thoroughly agreed with this remark. Certainly he knew the Christian religion to be one that provided hope and promise in time of distress. "Blessed is the man who endures trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him." (*James 1: 12.*) "Is there any one among you suffering? Let him pray. . . . And the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven." (*Ch. 5: 13, 15.*) The Christian faith gave a means through which comfort could be provided in time of affliction.

But Christianity, for James, was much more than just a religion of comfort. It was also a religion that disturbed—a religion that upset and called into question some of the natural tendencies of life, especially when these tendencies expressed themselves in too large a concern for the comforts of this world. It was a religion that called upon men to examine their pleasures and their satisfactions and then to renounce those which did not harmonize with a religious loyalty. For there are, he knew, many forms of enjoyment that stand quite in contradiction to the life of which Christianity speaks. "Unfaithful creatures! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?" (*Ch. 4: 4.*)

Perhaps these two strains in the message of James are most tightly drawn together in this well-known verse from the epistle: "Draw near to God and he will draw near to you" (*v. 8*). God will draw near to men. That is a confidence which James fully possesses. God is not aloof, removed, and forever unavailable. He is not the God of the philosopher who, in heavenly isolation, simply contemplates himself; nor is he the transcendent Creator who has given up all contact with his creation. Rather, he is a God of love who is concerned about men and who will approach them in his mercy to aid, to heal, to comfort, and to bless. But his drawing near to men rests, in some measure, upon their drawing near to him. God's ministrations are not known by the obstinate will or the unrepentant heart. Rather, it is to the soul made ready through a deep and abiding commitment that God draws near. His presence is most felt in a life that has given its primary attention to him. He "draws near" to the person who yields himself in obedient submission to Jesus Christ.

But how do we submit to Jesus Christ? This is the question which concerns James in the last two chapters of his letter. And he answers it by exposing to full view two affections that stand in the way of such submission. These are areas, he says, in which men need to be afflicted if they are to know God's comfort and joy.

Afflicted in Riches

First, says James, we need to repudiate the comfort of a great fondness for material possessions. James's words to those who have been indulging in this comfort are bitter and harsh: "Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have rusted, and their rust will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure for the last days. Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on earth in luxury and in pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned, you have killed the righteous man; he does not resist you" (*ch. 5: 1-6*). And again: "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and get gain'; whereas you do not know about tomorrow. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes." (*Ch. 4: 13, 14.*)

One is reminded by this statement of the words that Jesus himself spoke on one occasion on the subject of riches. Confronted by an individual who was seeking his aid for the gaining of greater wealth, he replied "Take heed, and beware of all covetousness; for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." And then he told a parable, saying: "The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns, and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

This is a type of comfort, say both Jesus and James, which needs to be subjected to searching scrutiny—the comfort of security and pleasure in physical possessions. Friendliness with the things of the world is enmity toward God, and a richness toward God is not to be found in a laying up of material treasures for oneself. The possessions of life are but fleeting and transitory, whereas the soul of man is made for eternity. So life calls for something greater and more important than the accumulation of its material goods. The comfort of wealth is not life's final goal.

But note this: neither Jesus nor James was speaking out against physical possessions as being in *themselves* evil. What they were criticizing severely was the attitude that gives possessions the chief place in man's affection. The distinction is important, for there have been forms of religion that have maintained a thoroughly ascetic point of view, holding that me should give up, as far as physically possible, ever contact with the material world. Men must live i poverty, these religions have said, begging for onl the barest necessities of life, and in general repudiat ing physical existence as a transitory evil to be suf fered through as long as its necessity continues Protestant Christianity, however, has never held thi pessimistic view of the world of things and has neve found any justification for it in the Biblical message God has created the world, in Protestantism's con viction, and his creation is a good to be used, and no an evil to be avoided.

Protestantism does recognize, however, that in proper scale of values a man must place his love fo God and the doing of God's will above his love fo the world and the possession of material things. S our Lord says: "Therefore do not be anxious, say ing, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink? or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek al these things; and your heavenly Father knows tha you need them all. But seek first his kingdom an his righteousness, and all these things shall be your as well." (*Matt. 6: 31-33.*) Jesus is asking men t put "first things first." More important than the physi cal concerns of food, clothing, and shelter are th Kingdom of God, which is a moral kingdom, and th righteousness that must prevail among men if tha kingdom is ever to be known.

James, therefore, is complaining against those wh have reversed this order of values. He condemns thos who have forgotten righteousness and moral respon sibility in their frantic search for material gain. H speaks against those who have been so captivated b the desire for physical luxury that they have sold thei souls for passing pleasures. Such men might believ in God, of course. But when they act as if there i something more important than God, then they hav forgotten him, for God is truly remembered only whe he receives a man's fullest loyalty. And so James ca say, in speaking to those obsessed by the desire t possess the dollars of his day, "Cleanse your hands

What to Look for in This Lesson

1. Would you say that *all* affliction or just some affliction comes to make us draw near to God? Does God send the affliction for this purpose, or does he use what comes to us for his purposes?
2. Does a person have to be rich to take pride in his possessions?
3. Consider the various ways in which men take pride in their virtue.
4. In summary of these lessons, what seems to be the main emphasis of the letter of James? Is he faithful to the teaching message of Jesus? Does he conflict with Paul in any way?

you sinners, and purify your hearts, you men of double mind" (*James 4: 8*). The double-mindedness of saying you love God, when you really love the things of the world, is not the gateway to the Kingdom of Heaven.

James, therefore, teaches that this kind of comfortableness must be subjected to affliction, the affliction of renouncing this desire for gain as life's primary motive and, indeed, of putting all cherished possessions at the disposal of God's will. Only when they do this can men draw near to God and know his drawing near to them. James's words are clear: "Submit yourselves therefore to God" (*v. 7*).

Afflicted in Virtues

There is a second type of comfortableness of life that James calls into question and that he feels must be set aside. If the first, which we have been discussing, is "pride of possessions," the second is a "pride of virtue." James's statement on this matter is summed up in these sentences: "Do not speak evil against one another, brethren. . . . There is one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you that you judge your neighbor?" (*vs. 11, 12*). We recall again the words of Jesus: "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye" (*Matt. 7: 1-5*).

If it is one of life's comforts to enjoy unduly one's possessions, it is also another of life's comforts to enjoy unduly one's virtues—or better, to enjoy one's behavior and to interpret that behavior as a virtue against which others can be criticized and condemned. And the latter, as well as the former, is far from the life that God intends for men. Not all the world's woes have been caused by men saying, "Above all, I want possessions." There have been more than a few brought about by the claim, "Above all, I am right, and you are wrong."

So James was again striking at the heart of the matter when he asked, "But who are you that you judge your neighbor?" (*James 4: 12*). This is a searching question, and it applies to our time as well as to his. For who are we to go about removing specks from our neighbor's eyes when we have logs in our own? Who are we to complain about our neighbor's faults and to criticize him for his behavior when our own lives also fall far short of that perfection which God desires from us? Some judgment of men is necessary and justified, of course. But the danger is always that we set up the standard of *our* lives as the means of judging the lives of others, forgetting that we also are always subject to judgment. The constant temptation is to forget that our lives must be continuously measured by God; thus we are tempted to enjoy the comfort of being uncritical with respect to our own behavior. This, too, is a comfortableness which needs to be subjected to affliction if we are truly to draw near to God. For a man prepares for the reception of God's love not through self-righteousness, but through subjecting himself to a sober and searching self-analysis that lays bare his own participation in the common sinfulness of men. This is the discomfort of humility for men who are naturally prideful. But it is in that humility that the solution to the human problem begins; for again the counsel of James is clear: "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" (*ch. 4: 10*, K.J.V.).

Purity of Heart Is to Will One Thing
(*James 4: 8*)

A Prayer by Soren Kierkegaard

FATHER in heaven! What is man without Thee! What is all that he knows, vast accumulation though it be, but a chipped fragment if he does not know Thee! What is all his striving, could it even encompass a world, but a half-finished work if he does not know Thee: Thee the One, who art one thing and art all! So may Thou give to the intellect, wisdom to comprehend that one thing; to the heart, sincerity to receive this understanding; to the will, purity that wills only one thing. In prosperity may Thou grant perseverance to will one thing; amid distractions, collectedness to will one thing; in suffering, patience to will one thing."[1] Through Jesus Christ. Amen.

[1] From *Purity of Heart*, translated from the Danish by Douglas V. Steere. Harper & Brothers. Used by permission.

Unit II
The Christian and the Jew

By J. Stanley Glen

1

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE JEWISH BIBLE

Read *Acts 13: 16-41.*

If it were possible to see the writers of the Bible face to face, we should be greatly surprised, not merely because of their different style of clothing and manner of living but because of the fact that almost all of them would be Jews. Although we know it in a general way, this well-known fact is seldom brought home to us. All our life we have associated the Bible and the Church with Gentiles. Most of our ministers and religious teachers, and nearly all the members of our Church, have been non-Jews. Only on rare occasions have we met a Jewish Christian. Perhaps all the Jews we know are those we have met in business—perhaps selling clothing, furs, jewelry, or lending money. These have all been outside the Church; they have perhaps had a connection with their synagogue, but we rarely know about that.

Because of this close association of the Bible and the Church with our Gentile life, we find it hard to think of Jesus as a Jew. It is hard to think of any connection between the Lord whom we worship and the Jewish merchant who sells us a suit of clothes. In fact, a Christian minister who ventures to tell his congregation that Jesus was probably an ordinary-looking Jew may have several people phone him after the service to express surprise. They would much rather think of Jesus as a fine-featured Anglo-Saxon type—as the imaginary product of religious art with beautifully colored flowing robes—a preference that they like to think is more "spiritual."

In saying all this, we may seem to be emphasizing a rather obvious fact, but it is a fact that nevertheless conceals a problem—a very real problem for many Christians today. They wonder at times why in their religious life they always have to go back to these ancient Jews. Back to Peter and Paul, back to Jesus, and back of them to Israel and the Old Testament—that is what they do every time they open their Bibles. Why not go back to the Greeks, the Romans, the Persians? to the Germans and French, the British and Americans, who have lived, reflected on life, seen its problems, and left behind their spiritual legacy? Why should our religious thinking revolve around the stories of Abraham and Isaac, Saul and David, and the prophets of one small nation that inhabited Palestine from two to four thousand years ago? Why should we import our religion from a foreign country? Why should our religion be the religion of foreigners? Why have we not developed our own religion right out of ourselves and our own soil? Certainly, let us worship Jesus as Lord and Saviour—it would be blasphemous to turn from him—but surely we can forget that he was a Jew and that his people were Jews! Surely we can leave behind

THE PASSOVER

A woodcut by Fritz Eichenberg

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hat very Jewish book, the Old Testament! Let us ave the "real" Jesus, who is more of an Anglo-Saxon han a Jew. Let us just have the "truth" that Jesus roclaimed, without any reference to his background nd the ancient past that preceded him.

The Early Church and the Old Testament

If these ideas have appealed to us, we should be nder no illusions as to where they lead. For this ame form of reasoning which procures for us a Gen- ile Christ, divorced from his Jewish background, en- bled the German Nazis to procure an Aryan Christ. Nor is it a modern thing, for as early as the middle f the second century an ancient heretic in the city f Rome, Marcion by name, proposed a similar kind f Christ. He wanted to free Christianity of all Jew- sh influence and even went as far as to reject not only he Old Testament but also every book in the New Testament that he thought was unduly colored by this nfluence.

But these attempts to divorce Jesus Christ from is Jewish background and the Jewish Scripture is nly possible by doing violence to the New Testa- ment. This is so for two reasons:

1. It ignores the fact that the New Testament is inseparably interwoven with the Old Testament. Apart rom the large number of Old Testament quotations hat appear in the New Testament, there are numerous llusions, idioms, and terms on almost every page that would be meaningless without the Old Testament. In passage after passage it is the Jewish background or some experience in the long history of Israel that provides the key. To try separating the two Testa- ments is as impossible as separating the crisscrossed threads of a rich piece of tapestry and retaining the design that both together have made.

2. It ignores the fact that the Early Church not only recognized the Old Testament as Scripture but also used it in the evangelization of the world. In fact, it was the one book to which Paul, Peter and John, and the other apostles appealed in all their preaching. They never thought of telling the story of Jesus without first going back into the Old Testament. It was true, of course, that the Early Church did not have the New Testament in its present form. Although most of the books were already written by the end of the first century, they circulated independently of one another. And they had to be tried and tested in the experience of the Church before their real authority as Scripture could be recognized. And it was not much before the end of the second century that the Church became fully conscious of the New Testament as another body of Scripture alongside the Old. Nevertheless, in all this period the Old Testament served the Church well—if anything, the New grew out of the Old as seed hidden in the soil takes root and sends its stem and branches upward to bear fruit at the same time as it pushes its roots and rootlets deeper and deeper.

What to Look for in This Lesson

1. What are the reasons for this study of Jewish-Christian relations?

2. Is it your experience that many people ignore the Old Testament background of our Christian faith? Is this due to anti-Semitism or to ignorance of the meaning of the Old Testament?

3. Why is it necessary to study this background in order to answer the question, "Who is Jesus Christ"?

As an illustration, consider Paul's sermon in *Acts 13: 16-41.* In *vs. 17-22* he surveys the history of Israel from the time of the Egyptian bondage until the time of David. He refers to the experience in the wilderness, the conquest of Canaan, the period of the Judges, the choice of Saul, and the triumph of David. It is all Old Testament history. But when he comes to David, he leaps across the centuries to Jesus, and in *vs. 23-31* tells the story of the coming of Jesus, his condemnation and death, his resurrection from the dead. From *v. 32* until the end of the sermon he emphasizes how in Jesus the inner meaning and purpose of this history has been fulfilled. His two key words are "promise" and "fulfillment." Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the promise God made to their fathers. And the Old Testament is quoted in support of this claim. Finally, to bring the sermon to a climax, Paul offers his audience forgiveness of sin and personal salvation through this same Jesus—which, as he says, they could not obtain by obedience to the law.

The Necessity of the Old Testament

But why is the story of Jesus interwoven with the story of Israel? Why is the Old Testament necessary to understand him? Is it just an accident that he was a Jew? Could he just as well have come from some other nation? Can we forget about his Jewishness in the same way as in our own country we soon forget the original nationality of our forefathers, and all become Americans? Every person has his background of heredity and environment which help to make him what he is; is this not what Israel was for Jesus?

No. Jesus' Jewishness was more than just background. When Paul first surveyed the story of Israel from the Egyptian bondage until the time of David, he was reminding his audience of the promise that God had made to Israel—a very special promise that was made to this nation and not to any other nation —and it was this promise of which Jesus was the fulfillment. This is why his two key words, "promise" and "fulfillment," are so very important.

In the history of Israel we have much more than ordinary history, an ordinary background of heredity and environment. We have the promise of God. We have history with God in the midst of it in a special

way—acting and speaking and pointing forward. To forget the Jewishness of Jesus, to want to eliminate the Old Testament, is to despise this special working of God. It is the same as denying that there was any special purpose of God through the ages that was finally realized in the coming of Jesus Christ into the world. And if there were no special purpose of God through the ages, then Jesus Christ himself was and is no special being, and God has not acted in him in a special way. So we see where the denial of the Jewishness of Jesus finally leads us.

In order to make this somewhat plainer, let us ask the simple question, "Who is Jesus of Nazareth?" And our answer as Christians will be that he is the Christ. We refer to him as Jesus Christ. But what do these two names signify? And what do they have to do with the necessity of hearing and fully recognizing the Old Testament? We can answer this by reflecting on the meaning of these names. The name "Jesus" was a common Jewish name which meant "Jehovah is salvation." It was only another form of the name "Joshua." As applied to our Lord, it was really his human name and identified him with his people. But the name "Christ" was a title—a very special title reserved for the One whom God would finally send to fulfill his promise to Israel and establish his Kingdom. It was the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word "Messiah," which literally meant "Anointed one." So we may say that the name "Christ" was our Lord divine title. He is Jesus *the* Christ.

But it is impossible to understand what this tit means without going back into the history of Isra and into the Old Testament. If there is meaning this title, it is because God had set apart Israel f his own special purpose. If we ignore this fact, the the name "Christ" is just another name, a convenie label, as devoid of meaning as our own last names. S we may say that the Old Testament is necessary if w are to know who Jesus is, because his life and destin are inseparable from the story of Israel and *its* destin and life.

Indeed, to hear the story of Jesus without hearin and fully recognizing the Old Testament is much lik hearing the final chapter of a book without the pr ceding chapters which point to it and give it mea ing. It is as foolish as hearing the answer to a prob lem in mathematical science and refusing to find ou what the problem is; for the Old Testament presen the problem of Israel, which tells us what the proble of our own existence is: our deep need for a redeeme Jesus the Christ is the answer to that problem. An what does the Christ mean to us if we do not kno our need of him? His name will remain only an empt word, and our whole life will be as foolish in the end a a man who plans a house and deliberately ignores i foundation.

2

JESUS CHRIST AND GOD'S COVENANT WITH ISRAEL

Read *Gen. 17: 1-8; Rom. 9: 1-8.*

PERHAPS you have heard it said that the Jews are God's chosen people. Perhaps you have wondered about it and asked yourself why God would overlook the majority of people and pick out them. In fact, the whole idea seems unfair—as though God were a temperamental father who shows favoritism, doing much for one of his children but neglecting the others. And why should he pick out the Jews? Are there not larger and more important nations, whose achievements have been exceptional and who have contributed greatly to civilization? Why the Jews?

Or, is this idea of the chosen people only an example of a misguided nationalism with which every nation is afflicted to some extent? Does not every nation, at one time or another, think that it has been chosen of God, and that it has a divine mission? What about those Nazis who believed that to be German is to carry the life of God in one's blood? And what about those Japanese who believe that they have descended from heaven and are a heavenly race, and those Chinese who call their country "The Middle Kingdom," themselves at the center, the rest of us on the margin? or the African Hottentots who ca themselves "the complete people"? or the Eskimo who call themselves "the men of men"? And wha about the way we speak of America as "God's ow country"? What do we mean by that? Where is there nation that at some period in its history has not ha similar ideas? And how is the Jewish idea differen from these?

God's Covenant with Israel

To answer this question we have to go back to th story of Abraham in the Old Testament, because he regarded as the father of the Jewish people. In hi their nation had its beginning. And through him Go chose them as his people. So the Jews always appea to Abraham. This is why in the New Testament hi name is prominent in some of the sharpest exchange between John the Baptist, Jesus, and Paul on the on hand, and the Jews on the other hand (see *Matt. 3: 9 John 8: 33-59; Rom., ch. 4; Gal., ch. 3*). In fact, th passages in Genesis that deal with Abraham wer standard passages in the Jewish schools, which every one was supposed to know (especially *Gen., chs. 15 17: 1-22*).

Now, what is meant by saying that Jews, through Abraham, are God's chosen people? It is the same, of course, as saying that they are an elect people, an adopted people, a covenant people—these are only different ways of saying the same thing. And how is it distinguished from what these other nations think of themselves? What makes it unique? By way of answering this, let us emphasize four main points:

1. *It is an expression of God's free grace.* It was God who chose Abraham, not Abraham and his descendants who chose God. It was God who took the initiative, not they who, after the fashion of other nations, made up their minds that he was to be their God, as a kind of patron and protector of their national interest. It was not because they were Jews, not because of their qualities, achievements, and human possibilities, not because of anything that they could bring to him that God chose them, but only because he wanted to express through them his great divine purpose. So all boasting on the part of Abraham and the Jew is excluded. They have no natural claim upon God's favor, no national right to his divine care.

And this we see emphasized in the story of Abraham. Everywhere it is God taking the initiative. It is he who tells Abraham to leave his country and kindred and go to another land. It is he who promises to make him a great nation. (*Gen. 12: 1-3.*) It is he who gives Abraham a new land for an inheritance. (*Ch. 15: 7.*) It is he who gives Abraham's childless wife a son. (*Chs. 17: 15, 16; 21: 1, 2.*) In the entire story there is nothing of that daring, adventuresome spirit of the modern man, who puts his trust in himself and his own resources, and launches out into the unknown. In sharp contrast to this attitude, Abraham's life revolves around God, not around himself. All that he has is God's Word—nothing else. As judged by worldly standards he is a fool, he is going out on a blind venture, in obedience to an impossible promise.

2. *It concerns the whole community.* When God chose Abraham, he was thinking not only of Abraham as an individual but also of the whole nation that he would establish through him. (See *chs. 12: 2; 13: 16; 15: 5.*) God's choice was not a private matter between himself and Abraham, but a corporate matter, in which Abraham was a representative of all who should come after him. Yet God never forgets the individual. In fact, as time went on and the history of Israel unfolded, these three were always held together in Hebrew life and thought: God, nation, and individual—with God over *both* nation and individual. And because he was God over *both* of these, it was wrong to think of either one being exalted at the expense of the other. To exalt the nation, as in modern totalitarianism, or to exalt the individual at the expense of the feeling of community, would be foreign to Biblical thinking. Both would threaten the covenant community. In the one case the nation lords it over the individual, and in the other the individual lords it over the nation, because in both cases there is not recognition that God is Lord, that nation and individual alike belong to him, since he has chosen them. So we have the Hebrew prophets challenging nation and individual alike when the behavior of either endangered the peace of the covenant community—ruthless kings like Ahab (*I Kings 21: 1-20*) and the rich who oppressed the poor (*Amos 6: 1-6; 8: 4-10*). Their actions were contrary to the covenant of God; for *this* they were condemned.

3. *The covenant concerns other nations.* In the popular idea of the Jews as God's chosen people, it is assumed that God overlooks the majority of people and picks out the Jews. It is assumed that God shows favoritism. But as a matter of fact, this is far from the truth. For when God chose his people, his eye was always on the rest of the nations. His purpose was world-embracing in its scope. His love was intended for all men. When he chose Israel, he chose her not for her own sake but that through her he might reach out into all the world. What else is meant by his remarkable promise to Abraham, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (*Gen. 12: 3*)—a promise that is repeated four times, running like a refrain through the whole of the Abraham story (*chs. 18: 18; 22: 18; 26: 4; 28: 14*)? In different places throughout the Old Testament the same remarkable thought breaks through as a promise to the whole world: "And nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God" (*Isa. 55: 5*); "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light" (*ch. 60: 3*); "For, from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles" (*Mal. 1: 11*).

4. *It means the judgment of God's people.* Here we find something that is the exact opposite of the popular idea of divine favoritism. Since Israel has been chosen of God, it is an especially serious thing to disobey him. The unique privilege entails a heavy responsibility. God is a gracious God, but he is also a Holy God. Therefore, to be chosen of him is an awful thing in the true sense of the term. And so Israel, which in its long history has been as forgetful and guilty as any other nation, has suffered in a special sense. It has come, as has no other nation, under his judgment, a judgment that at all times is intended to bring it back again. The clearest and perhaps the oldest expression of divine judgment upon the chosen people is found in *Amos 3: 2:* "You only have I known

What to Look for in This Lesson

1. What distinguishes Israel's sense of being a chosen people from all other nations' claims to a divine destiny?
2. Do you understand what it means to say that Jesus Christ *is* the Covenant incarnate?
3. How do we become the people of the new covenant?

of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." How different this is from the gods of the nations, who are only puppet gods, patrons of national interest, merely the spirit of the nation itself! Did the Nazis ever suppose that the so-called divine life in their blood, soil, and race would punish their nation for all its iniquities? Do we seriously reckon with the possibility that God is free to judge our nation? But Amos continues: "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! To what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkness, and not light" (*ch. 5: 18*). Here we see that the day of the Lord is not a mere extension of the natural optimism of the nations—"Prosperity around the corner," "Every dark cloud has a silver lining," "We have always come through"—but something different. It is the day of God's reckoning. And even for the chosen people it is darkness—not favoritism.

Chosen in Christ

In outlining these four main points, we must keep in mind that the Jews have often turned aside to the popular idea of divine favoritism. They have often thought of themselves as a chosen people by natural right. They have often forgotten that God chose the whole community—publicans and sinners as well as Pharisees. They have often refused to believe that God's purpose reaches beyond themselves to other nations. And they have often called down the judgment of God upon other nations as if it should never come down on themselves. But in all their misunderstanding and perversion of the covenant, something has been shining through. A remnant has been faithful. There has always been an Israel within Israel that has known what it meant to be chosen. This remnant has been praying and pointing forward to the one true descendant of Abraham who would keep the covenant, as Abraham could never keep it, because this One would *be* the covenant between God and man. What was only *spoken* to Abraham would now come in the flesh. And this would be new—the old covenant in new form—a new covenant—God's Son.

We know, of course, that Jesus Christ became the Covenant incarnate. "This is My body broken for you. This is the New Covenant in My blood which is shed for many." Therefore, the chosen people are now those who believe in him. So Paul could write: "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. . . . And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (*Gal. 3: 7, 29*, K.J.V.). And over against those Jews who forgot that the covenant was one of grace and not one of natural descent, Paul could write as he does in *Rom. 9: 6-8, 16.*

But God has not cast away his people. (*Rom. 11: 1.*) If they have not remained faithful to him, he has remained faithful to them. The call of Israel has not been in vain. The choosing of Abraham has not ended in failure. Through this One, who has kept the covenant and himself *is* the Covenant, Abraham and his people have their hope. He himself is God's mercy upon them. He has "borne their griefs, and carried their sorrows." (*Isa. 53: 4.*) He has wept over Jerusalem. (*Luke 19: 41.*) But this does not mean that they must cease to be Jews as they claim God's grace in Christ. To become a Christian does not, for a Jew, mean to become a Gentile! The Jews cannot deny their existence, nor the grace of God which called them to their destiny. Paul clearly stated this fact in *Rom. 9: 4, 5.*

All this history—all that Israel means in the true and proper sense—cannot and must not be forgotten. In all her strange past and the peculiarity of her ways she has been a sign of God's free grace to all nations. And for this we too shall rejoice. Because God is faithful in his promises to Israel, we believe that he will be faithful to us all. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him." (*Eph. 1: 3, 4.*)

3

JESUS CHRIST AND THE JEWISH LAW

Read *Ex. 20: 1-21; Gal. 3: 17-19, 23-25.*

It is easy to look on from the outside, see Jews and Christians at worship, see them in the way they live, and ask: "What's the difference? The one worships on Saturday, the other on Sunday. The one calls his place of worship a synagogue, the other a church. The one practices circumcision, the other baptism. The one refrains from pork, the other eats it. But both use the Old Testament. Both recognize the Ten Commandments. Both remember the stories of Abraham, Moses, and David. And both sing the psalms. So what's the difference? Isn't it just a matter of custom—just a different way of doing things, no one of which is very important if we think of the one God over all?"

It's easy, of course, to talk this way if we only see external things and fail to look at deeper matters. The difference between us appears in this: where the Jew always appeals to the law, the Christian appeals to the gospel. Not that the Christian forgets the law, appearing to be a lawless person. Rather he begins

ith the gospel in order to understand the law—this where the real difference arises. So we have to see here it all begins—how the Jew received the law nd the purpose the law was meant to serve.

The Giving of the Law

Now when we think of the law, we always think of Moses, for he was the one who received the law on Mt. Sinai. But we can't begin with Moses because here is a long story behind him which takes us back o Abraham. So let us begin with him.

Abraham, as we have learned, was the father of Israel. With him God made his covenant, promising o make of his descendants a great nation and through him to bless all nations. And God was true to his promise, because a few centuries later the families of the sons of Jacob who had settled in Egypt had greatly increased in number. And the rulers of Egypt were alarmed at the possible threat to their power. So the Egyptians sternly suppressed them, forcing them into slavery and attempting to limit their birth rate. But still they increased. (*Ex. 1: 8-22.*) And in the end their sons were saved from a strange death that swept the land as the angel of death passed over them. (*Chs. 11; 12.*)

At this stage in the story the work of Moses had begun, for he was the one who led his people in their escape from Egypt, in their amazing deliverance from the Egyptian Army at the Red Sea, in their wanderings through the wilderness. And finally on the mountain of Sinai he received the law from God to give to his people. (See *chs. 19 to 23.*)

But the question remains: How does all this help us in understanding the law? How does it show the purpose that the law was meant to serve? The answer follows when we remember what we learned last week about the covenant. The covenant is the background of the law, the soil from which it sprang, the tree on which it grew; without it the law cannot be understood. In the whole story we see how God was faithful to his covenant. He blessed his people and increased their numbers. He called Moses to be their leader. He saved them from death at the time of the first Passover. He rescued them from the Egyptian Army when crossing the Red Sea. And it was he—this God who had already saved them—who finally gave them the law. Little wonder, then, that the First Commandment begins, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (*ch. 20: 2*). For his salvation had already come before the law. Without it there would have been no need for the law.

But the people of God had to live. The problem of living together as a nation was before them. Certainly God had saved them from death, but there was still the problem of living the life expected of them as the covenant people. They had to have laws to govern their conduct, to protect them from themselves, from the influence of heathen religion surrounding them. And so through Moses the law was given—as a discipline, a divine means of protection, a guide to daily living.

What to Look for in This Lesson

1. Naturally, much in this lesson has already been the subject of earlier studies in the gospel of our Lord. Recall where you have had the discussion of gospel and law before, and consider how this repetition increases your understanding of this fundamental matter.

2. How does the marriage relationship serve to illustrate the concept of gospel and law?

3. Is there a difference between obeying Christ and obeying the law?

In fact, the whole matter of the covenant and the law reminds one of marriage. The covenant resembles the vow on the wedding day which sets a man and a woman apart for each other. It holds good for the rest of their wedded life, saving them for each other and setting the stage for all they do. But this is not all there is to marriage. There is still a life to be lived. They must learn to live together, establish a home, rear a family, and plan a budget. And for these tasks something is needed to govern their conduct, something to guide them, something equivalent to law. But the important point is this—all these things are not the cause of the marriage vow but its result. They do not affect its validity. The vow is just as valid, even though the home is poorly established, no family reared, and the budget confused. It still holds. So is it with God's covenant. His covenant is valid apart from the law. The keeping of the law does not make the covenant more valid. Disobedience to the law does not make the covenant less valid. (See *Gal. 3: 17.*)

The Misuse of the Law

But this important point was often forgotten, and for several centuries before the time of Christ it fell into the background of Jewish thinking. At the same time there was more and more of a concentration on the law and less and less of a direct and personal dependence on the Lawgiver himself. Centuries of foreign rule and domination had made the Jewish people wonder whether or not God cared. First the Assyrians, then the Babylonians, then the Persians, Greeks, and Romans had come and conquered the land. And the God who saved his people out of Egypt seemed powerless to save them now. So what was wrong? Why was all this happening?

The conclusion to which they came was that God's favor had to be won by a more exacting obedience to the law. True enough, they were the chosen people. But God was angry with them, and it was urgently necessary to win his favor. They would have to set themselves to the keeping of the law as never before. They would keep it in every detail—in fact, more

than this. They would go beyond the written law and observe the oral tradition that was growing up beside the written law. This consisted of rules and practices that resulted from the law's being applied to one situation after another—the accumulated mass of legal decisions as the scribes interpreted the law. In the written law, for example, they were told to remember the Sabbath Day: "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work" (*Ex. 20: 9, 10*). But under the slow process of scribal interpretation the accumulation of requirements around this one Commandment alone was amazing. As we have seen in other lessons in previous quarters, there were thirty-nine kinds of work prohibited, each of which was divided again into lesser kinds. Even such things as tying a knot, writing two letters of the alphabet, kindling a fire in the stove, cooking food, carrying a small object, climbing a tree, clapping the hands, walking more than two thousand cubits, were defined as work and therefore a violation of the Sabbath. Little wonder that Jesus was accused when his disciples pulled a few heads of wheat (*Mark 2: 23, 24*), when he told the crippled man to take up his bed and walk (*John 5: 10, 16*), when he healed a man's withered hand (*Mark 3: 1-6*). For all these things were defined as work—and a violation of the Sabbath. But behind it all, behind this emphasis on the details of the law, was the idea that God's favor could be merited by good works. It was just as some of the stricter Jews expressed it: "If Israel would only keep two Sabbaths properly, we should be immediately redeemed." Or, as one ancient rabbi put it, "The period of the redemption depends solely upon repentance and good works."

The Christian and the Law

To understand how the Christian attitude toward the law differs from this, we might return to the illustration of marriage. The vow comes first and is valid in itself. The details of living follow but do not add to or take from the validity of the vow. So is it with the covenant. It comes first and is valid in itself. God is faithful to his people. It is he who has set them apart. His choice is purely of grace. The law comes second and depends upon this validity, this grace. It is not obeyed in order *to win* God's favor, but rather for an opposite reason—out of sheer joy and thanksgiving *for* his favor. In other words, the Christian is good not in order that he might be redeemed as a result of his goodness, but good because he knows he has already been redeemed. His goodness is always a fruit of the Holy Spirit. And it is this same idea which appears in the Old Testament when the writers speak of finding delight in the law. They are Jews who have not misused the law, whose goodness expresses their joy in knowing that God has redeemed them.

Up to this point we have spoken of the covenant and the law. But we haven't explained where Christ comes into the story. We have only said that the Je appeals to the law, the Christian to the gospel. Bu the gospel is really the covenant—the old covenar become new. It is the story of the One who *is* th Covenant as he came into the world. So for the Chris tian the gospel comes first. It is the background of a his obedience to the law, the soil from which it spring the tree on which it grows.

But there is another important point. For just a in Christ the old covenant became new, so also i him the old law became new; he says to us, "A nev commandment I give to you." So we keep in mind tw things: the new covenant and the new commandment The first is Christ as our salvation; the second i Christ as our life from day to day, constraining, dis ciplining, and guiding us in his love. It is the latte that takes the place of the old law. And this mean that the Christian obeys the living Christ, not such things as abstract moral principles, traditions, cus toms, and regulations *for their own sake*. The Chris tian life is not a life hemmed in by rules. It is new freedom in Christ. But sadly enough, a popula opinion prevails that after a Christian has once be lieved in Christ, he must turn to rules. According t this viewpoint, Christianity consists of faith in Chris plus obedience to rules, instead of faith in Christ plu obedience to the living Christ. When the rules crowd out the living Christ, we get the same misuse of th law as we saw in the Jews, with all their rules fo keeping the Sabbath. Christianity becomes merely matter of "do's" and "don'ts" that make the Christian miserable.

But what about the old law? What should a Chris tian think of it? The best answer is the one by Pau (*Gal. 3: 24*). It was a "custodian until Christ came." As the American Standard Version translates th phrase, "The law is become our tutor to bring us unt Christ." The old law was given as a wise parent gives his word to his child—to warn him of danger, to pro tect him from himself, to guide him where he canno see. It is essentially protection. And it is given becaus the child *belongs* to the parent. But when the child grows up, he comes to know his parent in a new way He knows what the parent means to him—the sacri fices he has made, the care he has shown—and so hi obedience to the parent is now enlightened by a new knowledge and experience. It is different from what i was when he did not have this knowledge and expe rience. For now *he knows* as he never knew before. And so it is with the new and the old law. Under the old law a man obeyed—yes, because he belonged to God who had chosen him. But there was still a knowledge and an experience not available to him until this same God came in Christ; when this happened the old law became new. A man could now obey as the adult obeys who knows his parent and what the parent has done for him. He obeys not the mere words of the parent but the parent himself out of love. And so with Christ The Christian obeys him. He is the new law.

JESUS CHRIST AND THE TEMPLE

Read *Acts 6: 9-15; Heb., ch. 9.*

JESUS, a threat to the Temple, a threat to the house of God! What a strange thought, that the *Son* of God would endanger the *house* of God! Yet that was what Jesus' enemies meant when they cried, "Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, Save thyself, and come down from the cross" (*Mark 15: 29, 30,* K.J.V.). In *John 2: 19-22* we have his word that his body was the temple which, once destroyed by men, would be resurrected by God; but the Jews interpreted these words to mean the Temple at Jerusalem, and they now mocked his impotence. Yet he did destroy the Temple, in a spiritual way, and the leaders of the Jews somehow sensed that this was what he had come to do. They recognized the strange authority with which he had driven the money-changers out of the Temple. (*Luke 19: 45-48.*) And, in his daring act of forgiving sins, they saw a competitor who presumed to do what only the priests of the Temple in the name of God could do. (*Mark 2: 6, 7.*) And he had said to one of his disciples, "Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (*Mark 13: 2, K.J.V.*). Little wonder, then, that the priests took the leading part in finally stirring up the people against him and persuading Pilate to kill him. As far as they were concerned, his authority and what he taught would turn the people away from the Temple.

This same fear of Jesus as a threat to the Temple appears again in the charge against Stephen, the first Christian martyr: "This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against *this holy place,* and the law: For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us" (*Acts 6: 13, 14,* K.J.V.). The witnesses against Stephen, of course, were false; but their charge echoes, nevertheless, the fear of the priests. And there were good grounds for fear; for Stephen, in his defense, challenged their whole conception of the Temple, pointing out that God's revelation had not been bound to any one spot. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of Joseph and Moses, the God of Israel in the wilderness, had been the God of wanderers. Those men had heard the voice of God in various places—in Mesopotamia, in Egypt, and at Sinai—in a simple, direct, and personal way, without the services of a great temple such as now existed in Jerusalem. Even the ancient Tabernacle had been moved from place to place. But after Solomon had built the Temple, a cult had arisen that presumed to monopolize the presence of God. Its members claimed that the people could not find God except through them. Stephen's listeners endured his speech until he compared their action in killing Jesus to that of murder and the persecution of the prophets of old. But this enraged them, and they ground their teeth against him. In the next moment, they mobbed him, and, taking him out of the city, stoned him to death.

What Stephen did was to tear open a wound that many of the Jewish Christians would gladly have let heal over. In spite of the opposition to the new faith, there were still some priests and Pharisees being attracted to it. (*Acts 6: 7; 15: 1, 5.*) These no doubt encouraged a certain compromise with old Judaism that would have made the Christian faith merely a Jewish sect, thus losing its original power and significance. But Stephen preached Christ as a challenge to the Temple cult.

The Power of the Temple

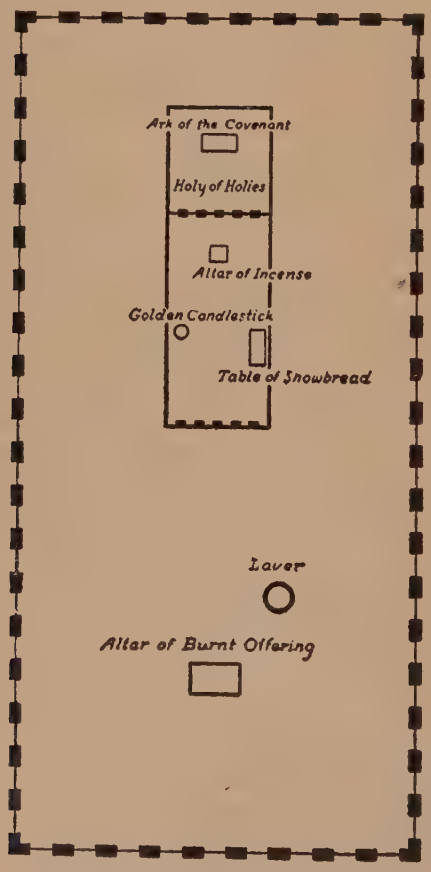
In the days of Jesus the Temple in Jerusalem was a powerful institution. The building itself, with its courts and surrounding walls, was the best that money could buy and one of the architectural wonders of the Middle East. Already forty-six years had been spent in building it, and another thirty-eight years would see its completion. (See *John 2: 20.*) Visitors who saw it for the first time never ceased to marvel at its magnificent gates, its rows of great marble pillars, its porticoes, its spacious courts, its inner sanctuary and rich furnishings. In fact, with its great walls it resembled a fortress that, with guards and its own police force, was strong against attack. At the same time, it served as a safe place for people to keep their money; and with its own rich treasury bulging from numerous religious dues, it became one of the richest banks of the Middle East.

It was also a great religious organization, headed by the high priest and the priestly aristocracy who held their position by hereditary right. Beneath them were several thousand priests, divided into twenty-four groups, each group serving the Temple for a limited time in the year, to permit all the priests to have their turn. Besides the priests there were great numbers of lesser officials called Levites, who were also divided into groups to permit them all to serve during the year. Among these there were musicians, doorkeepers, and Temple servants. In fact, the number of priests and those connected with the Temple was so great that only a fraction could live in Jerusalem itself, the rest living in towns. Naturally enough, the financial burden of this great organization fell most heavily upon the people and resulted in a heavy taxation for religious purposes.

Now it was this great system—this great religious, ecclesiastical, and financial organization, with all its influence—that Jesus threatened. And it was this same system that Stephen threatened when he preached Jesus as the Christ. For if the one mediator between God and man be Jesus Christ, if through him alone one approached the Father, then the alleged monopoly of the Temple was broken. People could approach God through Christ instead of through the priests of the Temple, with their elaborate services of worship, involving the slaughter of hundreds of animals for burnt offering. And, besides that, they could approach God through Christ with all the simplicity of a child-like faith. And they could approach him "without money and without price"—without the silver and gold and the Temple dues for which the priests were always asking. And they could approach him anywhere, without coming to Jerusalem.

The Old Sacrifice and the New Sacrifice

But was the whole idea of the Temple wrong? Should the Temple itself be condemned because its leaders defiled it? Should the house of God be blamed because of the money-changers? For where is the institution that at one time or another has not been weakened by poor leadership? And, furthermore, did not Jesus himself worship in the Temple? Did not he himself attend its feasts? And did he not call it his Father's house? If he so reverenced it, is there not an important place for it, despite the system of priests and officials that grew up around it? And what of the Old Testament authority for the Temple? At the same time that the law was given, the divine order for the Tabernacle was given, with specifications for its several parts, its furnishings, its services, and its priests. (*Ex., chs. 25 to 31.*) And the Tabernacle was the forerunner of the Temple, the institution upon which it was based. If we condemn the Temple entirely, we condemn the divine order that established it. And we deny to the people the means of forgiveness that God provided when they broke the law in spite of their best intentions. Certainly the law was given for people to obey, but even the best of people were guilty of breaking it. They knew they failed to keep it in the proper way, and they knew that this affected their approach to God. And so the Tabernacle was given that the sins of the people against the law might be forgiven and that they in turn might come to him.



PLAN OF TABERNACLE

What to Look for in This Lesson

1. How does Christ make the sacrificial system unnecessary for us?
2. What is the sacrifice that he requires of us? (See *Rom. 12: 1.*)
3. Are there any ways in which modern Christian worship seems to resemble Jewish worship under the old covenant?

But how were their sins forgiven? Did God merely overlook them in an easy, tolerant fashion? Did he merely forget them, as people so often suppose? No! There was nothing to encourage this popular view. The service of the Tabernacle showed how costly it was for God to forgive. Its emphasis on animal sacrifice and the shedding of blood symbolized this. Sins were not merely overlooked. They were covered or removed by something equal to them in importance and weight.

What this meant may be best understood by the plan of the Tabernacle. Without concerning ourselves with too much detail, we may describe it as follows: The essential plan was rectangular in shape, the first and outer area known as the Holy Place, the second and inner area known as the Holy of Holies. The Holy Place contained the golden lampstand (candlestick), the table with the bread of the Presence (showbread), and the golden altar of incense. In front of the Holy Place were the main altar and the laver. All the religious services during the year were conducted in the Holy Place. The Holy of Holies was of special significance. Even the high priest entered it only once a year, on the Day of Atonement, and then only after the most careful preparation and the observance of the strictest ritual. In the Holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant. This was a specially constructed rectangular box made of acacia wood, overlaid within

nd without with gold. Inside it were the Tables of the aw (Tables of the Covenant, as they are called), the olden pot of manna, and Aaron's rod. (See *Heb. 9: , 5.*) Distinct from the Ark, but resting upon it and f the same length and width, was a slab of solid gold alled the mercy seat. At the ends of the mercy seat, acing each other and looking down upon it, were two ngelic figures, with outstretched wings, called the herubim. It was here—on this mercy seat—that the igh priest once a year made atonement for his own ins and those of his people by the sprinkling of blood. Since God was believed to be present between the herubim, the sprinkling of blood on and before the mercy seat removed their sin and freed them from guilt gainst his law.

But all of this was the outcome of the old covenant. For just as the law was given, so the Tabernacle was given—both to serve the covenant. But when Christ came—who himself was the covenant and who, in coming, made it new—all things became new. There was a new law and a new sacrifice. He himself was the great High Priest, who by his death entered into the Holy of Holies, sprinkling the mercy seat, not with the blood of bullocks and goats, but with his own blood. And in doing this he atoned for our sin and freed us from guilt against his law. And he did this once and for all, not repeatedly, year after year, as the priests of old did, but once. This was enough to remove the guilt of his people forever.

In *Heb., ch. 9,* this whole idea of Christ as the High Priest is carefully developed. Just as the old covenant, with its old law, points to him, so does the old sacrifice point to him. And just as the old covenant, with its old law, came to an end in being fulfilled by him, so did the old sacrifice come to an end. For he is not only the Covenant and the Law, but also the sacrifice. And since he is the sacrifice, by his death putting away our sin forever, we have no further need of the old Tabernacle or of the Temple with all its priests. He alone is sufficient.

It was this deeper reason—the very mission of Christ himself as he saw his way leading to the cross—which made him such a threat to the Temple in Jerusalem. It was not that he was against the Temple itself, but that his offering up of himself fulfilled all that the Temple promised, and brought its work to an end. It was this which made him such an offense to the members of the Temple cult. They wanted a temple system of their own which would be self-sufficient and eternal without the Christ. They wanted a religion without the cross. Men like Stephen, of course, saw what this meant. They saw that all the tendencies, even within the Church, that compromise the gospel of the cross, especially those of a highly liturgical religion with its priests and altars, are essentially a return to the older Judaism. Their one confession is, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (*Gal. 6: 14,* K.J.V.).

5

THE CHURCH AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD

This lesson reviews the New Testament evidence regarding the Church as the New Israel, the new community of God. Scriptural references, therefore, occur throughout the lessons.

WHAT is the Church? When the average person hears this question, he thinks of various things —perhaps a building with a steeple and stained-glass windows, perhaps a denomination with a history and tradition, perhaps a body of people with Christian beliefs. But he seldom, if ever, thinks of it as the New Israel, the new people of God. That would be the farthest thing from his mind, because Israel to him probably suggests the Jewish people, or the distant Biblical past. As for the name's being applied to the Church, that would be strange indeed. The two things seem so different, so separated from each other.

And yet if we think of the old covenant, with its old law and its old sacrifice, the people corresponding to this would be the Old Israel. And if we think further of the new covenant, with its new law and its new sacrifice, the people corresponding to this would be the New Israel. The one follows from the other. Under each covenant God has his chosen people. Since, under the old covenant, they were called Old Israel, then it should not be surprising that under the new covenant they should be called the New Israel.

This, of course, would be vigorously denied by Judaism. If Judaism has any place for the idea of the New Israel in its thinking, it is in terms of the reestablishment of the Jewish nation in Palestine. In this case, the New Israel would be no different in principle from the hope of those nationalistic Jews in the days of Jesus, who could think only of a political Messiah and prosperity, power, and victory over all their enemies. We, of course, are not thinking of it in these terms.

The Evidence for the Teaching

1. *Christians are called "saints."* This familiar English name is frequently used in the New Testament, not for a few special Christians noted for their exceptional piety, but for all Christians. To be a Christian at all is to be a saint. (See *II Cor. 1: 1; Eph. 1: 1;*

Phil. 1: 1.) Furthermore, the name "saints" is used to translate the Greek word *hagioi,* which in the New Testament nearly always appears in this plural form and so refers to a collective group of people. It means that they were consecrated, set apart for a special purpose, separated unto God. But the main point for our purpose is the fact that this was a name commonly applied to Israel long before Christ came. It occurred in several forms: "the saints," "the saints of the Most High," "the people of the saints" (see *Dan. 7: 18, 27;* compare *Eph. 2: 19*). So what we have in the New Testament is a name for Israel taken over and applied to the Church—a practice which implies that the early Christians thought of themselves as the New Israel.

2. *Christians are called "the seed of Abraham."* In an earlier lesson it was emphasized that Abraham was the father of the Hebrew people, that any serious religious discussion with a Jew would sooner or later shift back to him. The Jews always prided themselves on being sons of Abraham. When God called him, he also called them, because, to their way of thinking, it was enough to be born a Jew in order to belong to the chosen people. But Paul saw that God's call was entirely of grace, that anyone, Jew or Gentile, who knew the grace of God (i.e., the call of Christ) belonged to the chosen people, which meant that he belonged to Israel. Therefore, he spoke of Christians as "the seed of Abraham." In fact, in *Gal. 3: 29* he is very explicit: "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (K.J.V.). And, as if to emphasize the point, at the end of the epistle he even refers to Christians as "the Israel of God" (*ch. 6: 16*).

3. *Christians are called "the true circumcision."* If there is one sign that distinguishes the Jews as the covenant people, it is the sign of circumcision. To understand what it means, we must think of it not in the narrow sense of a ceremonial act but as a symbol of Jewishness. We have to keep in mind all the deep religious associations that have grown up around it. In a sense, what the cross means to a Christian, circumcision means to a Jew. It marks him out as belonging to Israel. And so it was common to refer to Israel as "those of the circumcision." With this in mind, it is not hard to see that when Paul refers to Christians as "the true circumcision," he means they are the true Israel, which means they are the New Israel. Thus we read in *Phil. 3: 3:* "For we are the true circumcision, who worship God in spirit, and glory in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh."

4. *Christians are called "an elect race," "a royal priesthood," "a holy nation," "a people for God's own possession," "the people of God"* (*I Peter 2: 9, 10,* A.S.V.). These are names customarily applied to Israel which are taken over and directly applied to Christians. Each name is more of the character of a title, calling attention to some aspect of Israel's role as a chosen people, all of which makes it especially significant to find these names taken from the Old Testament and applied to Christians with only slight adaptations. The entire description is one of the best examples in the New Testament of the Church regarded as the New Israel.

5. *Christians are the inheritors of the promise.* In the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews we find an interesting survey of the history of God's servants in the Old Testament. It begins with Abel, then traces the succession through Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, those who crossed the Red Sea, those who took Jericho, through the Judges to Samuel and David, and then the prophets until the time of Christ. Finally, it sums it up in the following terms: "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (*Heb. 11: 39, 40,* K.J.V.). In looking over the chapter and conclusion, it is evident that the writer of the epistle sees a definite continuity between Israel and the Church. The pronouns "they" and "us" in *v. 40* make this clear. The line is drawn from them through Christ to us, binding all together. The promise made to Israel is fulfilled through Christ unto Christian believers. And since it is fulfilled to them, Christians cannot be regarded otherwise than as the New Israel.

What to Look for in This Lesson

1. Do you think it is important for us to understand this concept of the Church as the New Israel of God? Why?
2. Does the Scriptural evidence for this teaching seem conclusive to you?
3. Do you agree that the concept of a "catholic" Church was part of the inner meaning of God's purpose in his choice of Israel as his chosen people?

The New Israel as Catholic

In *Eph. 2: 11-21* we see how the Gentiles are united to Israel through Christ. It is not a case of Gentiles becoming Jews, or of Jews becoming Gentiles, but of both becoming new men through Christ. In this way their hostility to each other is overcome, and they are reconciled to each other. And since those who belong to Israel become *new* and the Gentiles become the same thing, then they all become the New Israel. This is the way Paul expresses it: "For he [Christ] is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility . . . that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace" (*vs. 14, 15*).

What we see here may be called the *catholic* nature of the New Israel. And when we say this, we mean much more than the usual definition of the word "catholic" found in dictionaries, viz., "universal," "world-wide," "that which is accepted by all." Although true enough as far as it goes, such a definition could apply

almost any kind of teaching and organization, provided its geographical scope is sufficiently extensive. But Paul is not thinking primarily of geography. Nor he thinking of a Church that simply reaches out to ake in all men in an attempt to impress the world ith its broadmindedness. In fact, one does not have be a Christian or even to believe in God to practice is kind of catholicity. All that is necessary is a belief the thing that all men have in common—their humanity. But this is not what Paul is talking about. This not what he means by a "catholic" Church. For it is ot their common humanity that has brought the Jew nd Gentile together. It is not their reasonableness, heir common sense, or their ability to discuss the subect around a table that has made them one and has roken down the dividing wall of hostility. It is Jesus hrist and he alone. It is "the blood of Christ" (*v. 13*), he cross of Christ (*v. 16*), which has reconciled Jew nd Gentile to each other and to God. And it is *this* ind of reconciliation, *this* kind of getting together, to hich the word "catholic" refers. It is "universal" not ecause of what men have in common, but because of he power of Christ to reconcile men, irrespective of ace, nation, class, or sex. Its meaning is best seen in *Gal. 3: 28:* "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

We have explained the meaning of the term "catholic" carefully in order to make plain one of the principal characteristics of the New Israel as distinct from the Old Israel. In the sense in which we have defined the term, all who are truly Christian are *catholic*, regardless of denomination. But this catholic nature of the New Israel was not a project that Paul and his associates thought out and planned by themselves as an outcome of their idea of grace. It was itself the result of the activity of God in their midst. This is why the book of The Acts emphasizes so strongly that the spreading of the Christian faith out into the Gentile world was the outcome of the power of the Holy Spirit. *Acts 1: 8,* which may be regarded as the theme of the whole book, makes this clear. So we may say that this amazing catholicity, which is of the Holy Spirit, represents God's hidden purpose from the beginning for his chosen people. It discloses the secret meaning of Israel's election. In choosing Israel, God had his eye upon the Gentiles from the very first; it was in his eternal purpose to save them. The preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles was therefore not a divine afterthought, not a sudden change in God's plans due to the fact that the Jews rejected Christ and made the cross necessary. No, it was a particular stage in the outworking of the purpose that he had from the beginning. It was true, of course, that the prophets had important insights into the way God's mercy reached out to include the Gentiles, but they did not see that this outreach belonged to the inner meaning of God's purpose in his choice of Israel as his peculiar people. In the New Israel this original purpose of God was revealed; in the Old Israel it was hidden, although operative. In the New Israel it was fulfilled; in the Old Israel it was promised. In both, God was active in his grace.

6

JUDAISM THROUGH THE CENTURIES

Read *Rom., chs. 9 to 11.*

Why have the Jews persisted through the centuries? Why have they survived the worst kind of suffering and persecution? Why have they endured when the little neighboring countries of ancient Palestine have long since disappeared and been forgotten? These are the questions to keep in mind as we hear the story of Judaism through the centuries.

We take up the story at one of those critical periods in Jewish history when there was doubt of the Jewish people surviving. Already the Christian faith had made its appearance and was spreading from Palestine into the Roman world. But for Judaism, trouble seemed to multiply. First came the terrible fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple (A.D. 70). The Roman Army battered its way through the walls of the city, terrorized its famine-stricken defenders, burned the Temple, and sold thousands into slavery. The whole Temple system, with its great wealth and power, its priests and sacrifices, its Sadducean aristocracy, disappeared forever. Then a half century later came a crushing defeat to the scattered Jewish communities of Cyrene, Egypt, and Cyprus, which, after long years of persecution, had dared to rebel. Every Jew in the island of Cyprus was put to death. Those in Egypt and Cyrene were treated with almost equal ferocity (A.D. 115). Finally came the worst experience of all—the Emperor Hadrian's revenge for Jewish armed rebellion in Palestine (135). Horrified at the attempt to rebuild Jerusalem as a pagan city, the Jews had risen in violent warfare against the power of Rome. And the Romans, after a slow, stubborn campaign, had crushed the Jewish armies with a savage vengeance. Hundreds of thousands were slain. The slave markets were glutted. And Hadrian's further orders forbade circumcision, Sabbath observance, and feast days. The study and teaching of the Jewish law was punishable by death. No Jew was allowed to approach Jerusalem.

And yet, through all these calamities, Judaism survived. When one center of influence disappeared, another rose to take its place. When all centers disap-

peared for a time, the old faith persisted beneath the surface. And even apart from Palestine itself were those members of many Jewish communities scattered throughout the world who, when tragedy struck the homeland, turned to their law and synagogues.

A New Center for Judaism

The effect of this devastation and suffering gradually meant, however, that Palestine lost its place of leadership in the Jewish world. Its Judaism persisted but could not thrive. So for the next few hundred years the center of influence shifted to Babylon, where the Jewish people increased in wealth and numbers; they reached their peak there about the year 500. Much could be said of their life and culture, their occupations, religion, and government, but these must be put aside as we think of their main achievement, which has shaped the character of Judaism to the present day: the work known as the Babylonian Talmud.

As we have already seen, the Jewish Temple, with its priests and sacrifices, had disappeared. So had the Jewish Zealots, who hoped by force of arms to overthrow the power of Rome and establish a Jewish state. But those who remained turned to the law, to study and learning, to the training of their children in the religion and ways of their fathers. To understand what this meant we have to keep in mind that the Jewish Scriptures now included the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings—the Law being the first five books of the Old Testament, the object of the greatest devotion. But besides this primary written law was the oral law, the result of legal interpretations of the written law applied to the greatest variety of situations. And since the Jews, in their stress upon the importance of "doing" above "believing," tried to find the right of way of pleasing God under every possible condition, the oral law assumed great importance. These laws accumulated until they were eventually codified and written down about the year 200 in the form known as the Mishnah. But this was not the end. The Jewish rabbis continued the study and application of the Mishnah to an ever-increasing variety of situations, and in course of time their commentaries reached a tremendous size. And when these were written down together with the Mishnah, the total result was known as the Talmud. One Talmud was produced in Palestine over a limited period of time, and another in Babylon over a longer period. The latter, known as the Babylonian Talmud, was more elaborate; it was completed about the year 500.

So we cannot understand the survival of the Jew apart from his peculiar devotion to the law, in which his one desire was to please God by the strictest obedience to the faith and traditions of his fathers. And not even the severest persecution could turn him from it. The Talmud is to an Orthodox Jew what the New Testament is to a Christian—it stands alongside of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Therefore, in a real sense, the difference between Judaism and Christianity is the difference between the Talmud and the New Testament.

What to Look for in This Lesson

1. Go through the history of Judaism since A.D. 70, as it is given in this lesson, and be sure you understand what these words stand for and when they arose in history:

Fall of Jerusalem
Mishnah
Talmud
The Golden Age of Judaism
The Inquisition
Hasidism
The ghetto
Reform Judaism
Orthodox Judaism
Zionism

2. How do you account for the persistent continuance of Judaism despite persecution? How do you think the Jew himself would explain it?

The Jews in Western Europe, 900-1400

Much could be said of the Jews in the Western world under the Roman rule, but our aim is only to see the highlights of their history. So we come to the year 1000, when the center of influence in the Jewish world had shifted from Babylon in the East to Spain in the West. Here we see a remarkable growth, due to the privileges the Jews enjoyed during and after the time of Moslem rule. In fact, it was a Jewish golden age, one of the brightest in their long history of sorrow and suffering, one in which their faith and culture flourished for three centuries (900-1200). It was an age of Jewish merchants and statesmen, Jewish scholars, poets, and philosophers, Jewish students of the law, the greatest of whom was Maimonides (1135-1204). Indeed, the peace and freedom of these three great centuries have ever remained a source of pride to the Jewish people as they realize how much they achieved for themselves, how much they contributed to the glory of Spain.

But over the next two centuries (1200-1400) rumblings of opposition could be heard, at first faint and unsuspected, then louder and louder, until the storm broke forth in the violent persecution of the Spanish Inquisition. And the saddest part of the story is the guilt of the Christian Church, for through the centuries it failed to correct its own misunderstanding of the Jew and permitted abuse and discrimination to grow. Already the Jews had been expelled from England, France, and parts of Germany, making it plain that the doors of Western Europe were gradually closing against them. Already they were ignorantly blamed and persecuted for the spread of that terrible scourge, the Black Death (bubonic plague), which took so many hundreds of thousands of lives in Europe

348). But the worst was yet to come. In the year 91 mob violence against them swept through one nish city after another. Their synagogues were ken into, their homes and places of business at- ked, and large numbers killed. Every kind of pres- e was used by the Church to force conversions, and ny Jews responded to escape the torture. But as e went on, the Church discovered that many of se were still secretly loyal to Judaism. So a terrible tem of inquiry began which was known as the In- isition. Stern, unscrupulous prosecutors, determined root out heresy in all its forms, pried and spied into sonal life, punishing the victims with all the devices medieval torture. Finally, in 1492, all Jews were elled from Spain.

e Jews in Eastern Europe, 1500-1800

The story of the Jews now shifts to Eastern Europe, ere they succeeded in finding a refuge after so many ors were gradually closed against them in the West. re they settled in Poland, Russia, and Turkey, the ree great areas of Jewish influence from the sixteenth the nineteenth centuries. The greatest influence was erted in Poland. Already there were Jewish settle- ents in these countries from earlier times, and these re now increased by the new arrivals from the West.

we think especially of Poland, the fortune of the wish people varied with the strength of the Polish overnment and its power to defend itself and main- in peace and order. When the government was strong, e Jews generally enjoyed its protection, but when it as weak, they suffered not only the hardship that ost people suffered, but also the persecution that cer- in elements were only too ready to inflict upon them.

One of the most conspicuous features of Polish Juda- m, due in part to extreme poverty and unrelieved ffering, was the rise of mysticism and with it a re- ival of the ancient expectation of the Messiah. Var- ous pretenders appeared from time to time. They ever failed to gather a following from different parts f Eastern Europe, but always in the end their claim as unfulfilled. But, out of this trend toward a re- gion of personal feeling and warmth of spirit, there ame the movement of Hasidism, which laid greater mphasis on prayer than on study, on emotion than on ntellect. As such, it found itself in conflict with the raditional Judaism, which clung to the study of the aw as the highest form of piety. In fact, at times this onflict seriously divided the Eastern Jews against one nother.

At the same time that Eastern Europe became their ome, a new and dreadful menace to the Jews made its ppearance in the West—first in Italy and Germany, ater in other countries and in the East itself—the hetto. This was the awful fact of compulsory segrega- ion which meant that the Jews could live only in a cer- ain restricted area of a city, as fixed by law. Often it was the poorest section, greatly overcrowded and in- sanitary, with narrow, winding streets and tumble- down houses, often separated from the rest of the city by walls and gates, which were locked at night and guarded by Gentiles. And should any Jew attempt to escape, he could expect only the severest kind of pun- ishment. More than this, the peculiar clothes he had to wear—a peaked hat or a yellow badge—would mark him out for ridicule by the ruffians of the city. Alto- gether, the ghetto produced a ghettolike mentality in which the Jewish soul was imprisoned, turned inward upon itself to find some hope in fleeting joys, but mostly to ponder its sorrows. From the outside world there seemed little to expect but more abuse and hos- tility. From the inside there was little to do but set oneself against it, to live by one's wits, to make the most of the smallest resources.

The Jews in Recent Times, 1800-1950

With the rise of modern democracy and its quest for freedom and the outworking of a deeper under- standing of Christian charity, the Jews of Europe gradually took heart. At last there were signs of hope. One after another the closed doors opened again— in Holland, England, France, and other lands. Besides these was the great land beyond the sea—America. The arts and sciences, all the possibilities of a free culture, beckoned to the imprisoned Jewish soul, which at once responded. A new world and a new life seemed at hand. And the result was twofold: (1) a gradual liberalizing of Jewish thought and life, an adapting of the old ways of their fathers to the modern spirit, a rethinking of their faith; and (2) an opposite tend- ency—a fear of the old faith being swallowed up in the quest for new things, a desire to conserve the best from the past. Out of the first of these came Reform Judaism; out of the second a renewed emphasis on Orthodox Judaism.

But in spite of the hope that the freedom of modern life promised the Jews, the old opposition against them was deeply set. Many Jews who rejoiced at freedom rejoiced too soon. For the new freedom was accom- panied by a new nationalism as each modern nation began to think of its freedom as a means of expressing its peculiar spirit, including, of course, its own selfish lust for power. And the presence of the Jew seemed a rival nationalism, a foreign element that could not be assimilated. And the result was a fresh outburst of an- tagonism against him—a new modern form of anti- Semitism. For many Jews the old problem of the cen- turies confronted them: What were they to do? Where were they to turn? For some the answer lay in giving up their Judaism and becoming absorbed into the life and culture around them. For some the middle way seemed best. But for others the only hope seemed that of returning to the land of their fathers, to a place where at last they could rule themselves, free from the threat of a foreign power. The movement they began was known as Zionism, the product of which, as seen today, is the new state of Israel.

At the beginning of our lesson we asked ourselves

why the Jews have persisted through the centuries, a question all the more significant when we see the persecution they have endured. Is it their peculiar devotion to the law? Is it the strange secret of the Bible itself—that a despised and rejected people would speak to *us* of *our* redemption? Is it Jesus Christ the Jew, who, like his people, was also "despised and rejected of men"? Is it the answer Paul gives: "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: . . . O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (*Rom. 11: 25, 26, 33,* K.J.V.)? In these words we have the key that will help to answer our question. For in the wisdom of God Israel remains a persecuted but persistent minority in order to awaken us to our heritage and to show us the nature of our vocation as the New Israel of God; but "all Israel shall be saved," since it is beloved of God. The ultimate destiny of Israel was a problem for Paul as it is a problem for us; and a careful study of *Rom., chs. 9–11,* where he wrestles with this problem, will help us see our way in seeking a solution to it.

7

MODERN JUDAISM

Read *Luke 10: 25-37.*

WHERE are the Jews? In this lesson we want to answer this question in two ways: (1) in its geographical sense, and (2) in its spiritual sense. In other words, we want to know where the Jews actually live in the world today and where they are going in their religious life. Unless we know these two things, our Christian approach will be seriously handicapped. For it is scarcely possible to approach a man if we do not know *where he is* in the fullest sense of the term.

Where Do the Jews Live?

In our last lesson we saw that the majority of Jews in the nineteenth century lived in Eastern Europe. In fact, in 1880 three quarters of the Jewish population of the world lived in this area. But since that time tremendous changes have occurred. Great shifts of Jewish population have taken place through emigration and great numbers have perished through persecution, thereby changing the entire picture of the distribution of Jewish people throughout the world. The heaviest emigration was to North and South America, especially to the United States. In 1880 the total Jewish population in our country was 230,000; during the past generation it had reached the largest number of any country in the world, 4,770,000.[1] One third of these lived in New York City and nine tenths in cities of 100,000 or more. Before 1939 there were 3,000,000 Jews in Poland, about 3,000,000 in Russia, 850,000 in Rumania, with 500,000 in both Germany and Hungary. In Czechoslovakia, Argentina, Austria, and France, the Jewish population varied from 360,000 to 200,000 respectively. Palestine had 200,000. But this was before 1939. By 1945 persecutions had taken a staggering total of approximately 6,000,000 Jewish lives. Nearly all the Jews in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Holland, and Belgium were wiped out, almost two thirds of those in Rumania, a half of those in Hungary, and a third of those in Germany occupied Russia. In Germany itself they were almost wiped out except perhaps a few hundred who by various ways escaped. As judged by relative numbers the Jewish people suffered a greater loss of life in the Second World War than any other people—mostly due to a fiendish, systematic, scientifically planned extermination; such extermination is utterly unparalleled in history. And this has meant that the center of Jewish wealth, population, and influence has now shifted to the American world, especially to the United States.

Where Is Judaism Going?

It would be foolish to assume that Judaism always remains the same. For momentous changes in the surrounding world have brought changes for Judaism also. The river that flows through rich brown farmland sucks up the color and sediment of the land in itself. But if its sources fail, the river can lose itself, dry up, and even disappear, leaving only the river bed behind. And whether Judaism merely sucks up the color and sediment of the surrounding world and continues to flow on as a powerful stream, or its sources fail and it disappears—this is the issue today.

Where is Judaism going? This is the question which serious Jews are asking themselves as they ponder the world and the changes of life and thought that they see within it. In the ghetto it seemed that nothing could change—least of all the Gentile persecution. In Eastern Europe it also seemed that nothing could change, for over the centuries the same requirements of the Jewish law, the same traditions and ceremonies obtained, despite the fierce rage of Nazi persecution.

[1] These statistics are those given in *A History of the Jews,* Solomon Grayzel.

the Communist opposition to all religion. So we e Eastern Jewish emigrants to America who cling *Orthodox Judaism*. They cannot change. And they ink their religion cannot change, or at least it can ld its own against the momentous changes around But their children change. They live in American ties. They speak the English language and gradually ave their Yiddish tongue behind. They read the mics, attend the shows, play the games, and acquire e arts and sciences the Gentiles know, and they soon gin to wonder at their parents who go on Saturday the synagogue, observe the same old customs and ast days, and try to live apart.

And so these children begin to shift their loyalty. second generation arises which turns from Orthodox udaism to *Conservative Judaism*. This generation ies to follow the middle road: the one that does ot insist on the old way where it conflicts too sharply ith the modern way and yet retains the old way. But this generation also has its children who go one ep farther. They read the comics, attend the shows, nd play the games the Gentiles play, and they begin wonder at their parents, as these in turn had won-ered at theirs. And they do even more. They forget ne Yiddish tongue. They discard their Jewish names. hey worship on Sunday instead of Saturday. And ney simplify their religion—discarding many of the itual laws, imposing no strict doctrines except the ne that all must be brothers and love God and live good moral life. And with this they build rich syna-ogues where an organ and choir and sermons can be eard, as in a Protestant Christian service. And the esult is known as *Reform Judaism*, which prides itself n reconciling the Jewish religion with modern learn-ng and civilization.

But things do not stop here, for the Jew is no more mmune to secularism than is his Gentile neighbor. He can doubt his religion the same as anyone else. He an lose interest in all religion, in the old traditions, even in going to the synagogue, "reformed" as the ynagogue may be. He may only attend occasionally or drift away entirely, with no more concern for Sab-baths and feast days, worship and prayer, wishing only to be as everyone else, merging himself in the masses of men. In doing this he finds his friends where Gentiles find them, and intermarries, losing his Jewish part in the great blending of men and nations so often seen today. In this uncertain stage he may harbor his doubt and skepticism and become agnostic. Or his mind may be open to other religions—curious to see what they may say—attracted by things he has learned about them, even the faith his fathers rejected. Or, in the loneliness of having no religious home, living as a Jew but disowned by Jews and Gentiles alike, his heart may crave affection, desiring nothing so much as hav-ing a friend.

All Jews, then, are not the same. There are Ortho-dox Jews, Conservative Jews, and Reform Jews—the three great divisions in American Judaism. There are

What to Look for in This Lesson

1. Characterize briefly the three branches of modern Judaism: Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform.

2. What are the political implications of the Zionist movement? What is its religious significance? Discuss this movement with a Jewish friend to learn how he feels about it.

3. What is the best thing a Christian can do to help a Jew understand Christianity?

skeptical and agnostic Jews. There are spiritually homeless Jews whose minds are open to anything that promises help and kindness. And there are Christian Jews.

What Is Judaism Doing?

It is not surprising that persecution, the need of migrating to strange countries, and the inward changes of their religious life, have filled the Jewish people with fear and apprehension. In every land they face discrimination. And they can never forget the six million who perished in Nazi Europe. But when they look at themselves, they see their divisions. They are scattered over the world. Their religion is not what it used to be. Because it is changing within, it does not hold them together as in former times. So they long for Jewish unity, a greater emphasis on Jewish co-operation. And this may be seen in a hundred different ways. It is seen, for example, in the unions of various types of Jewish congregations. In the United States the Orthodox Jews have formed the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America; the Conservative Jews, the United Synagogue of America; the Reform Jews, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. It is seen in the large number of Jewish papers and magazines designed to foster a community spirit. It is seen in the numerous welfare organizations: burial societies, social service, orphan care, aid to the poor, homes for the aged, hospitals and nursing homes. It is seen in the societies to aid and advise the Jewish emigrant.

But it is also seen in the Zionist movement, which finds the answer to Jewish problems in the hope of a Jewish state in Palestine. Here they would be drawn together in the common task of building a national home, a refuge, a place free from Gentile domination. Here they could live together with a pride in their nationality. In this political aspect of its life the Zionist movement is Jewish nationalism. But its religious nature is another question. For the Eastern Jew whose faith is rooted in his Jewish past, whose Judaism is Orthodox, the return to Zion fulfills his religious hope. It is the preparation for the promised kingdom (Messianism). But for the Western Jew whose faith has been compromised with modern thought, whose religious life has changed (if not dis-

solved), it fulfills a merely practical hope. His nationalism is often as empty of religious faith as any modern nationalism. And it is the Western Jew who has the money to build the Jewish state, not the Eastern Jew. But not all Eastern or Western Jews favor the Zionist movement. It cuts across their inward divisions. Communist Jews in Soviet lands violently oppose it. Many Western Jews show no interest in it. Their adopted land is home to them, and their Judaism is a religion, not a nationality. They wish to be known as French, British, or Americans, as their Gentile neighbors.

The Christian as a Good Samaritan

As we think of modern Jews, it is easy to forget that nearly half a million of them are Christian Jews. And it is easy to forget that many others cherish a secret interest in the Christian faith and would turn to the Church if given a welcome and made to feel at home. Many Jews are attracted to Jesus Christ. Many have read the New Testament. But they hesitate to make the decision. Their minds are undecided but their hearts are touched. And what they need is love rather than arguments, kindly efforts to teach them the meaning of the Christain faith, not coercive attempts to bring them into the Church by "high-pressure" evangelism. They simply need to be treated as human beings.

What this means is no better exemplified than in the parable of the Good Samaritan, the main point of which is so often overlooked. Here we find Jesus talking with a Jewish scribe who has asked him the question, "Who is my neighbor?" And, strangely enough, Jesus uses the example of a Samaritan—a people whom the Jews despised and would scarcely class with their dogs. It's the same old question of racial and religious discrimination. It's the tremendous barrier between the Samaritan and the Jew. But Jesus speaks of a new kind of love which breaks through the barrier. And this time it is the Samaritan. He found a wounded, dying man on the road—in all probability a Jew. And he didn't begin by asking the man if he was a Jew, what his religion was, what he believed, and how much he tithed, but he stooped down to bind up his wounds and pour in oil and wine. And his love did not stop there. He brought the man to an inn and made provision for him. Nor did the Samaritan seem to think he was doing anything special. His act was the childlike simplicity of real obedience to God, whose presence there on the road laid a mighty claim on the Samaritan's heart.

In a real sense the Jewish people in modern times are like the wounded and dying man lying on the road. And the Christian approach is that of the Samaritan, not that of the priest and Levite who passed by on the other side. It is the approach of a love that breaks through a tremendous barrier—thus showing itself to be a radical love (see *Eph. 2: 14*). It is much more than what our tame moralized interpretations of this parable indicate with their nice talk about being kind to others. It is a love so radical in its character that it does not count the cost or serve God merely up to a certain point, but goes with him all the way. But, in saying this, there is one thing to remember. In order to love our neighbor as ourselves it is first necessary to *understand* our neighbor. Real love always seeks to understand. And as this concerns the Jew, it means the need of understanding him. It means knowing where he is—where he lives—where Judaism is going—what Judaism is doing. In fact it means knowing the long history behind the Jew and the deeper reasons for his existence.

8

ANTI-SEMITISM

From the many passages in the Old Testament that comfort the Jews in the time of affliction, we select for this lesson Ex. 15: 1-18.

IT USED to be thought that the modern Western world was free from the barbarism of primitive tribes and the deliberate practice of cruelty so often seen in ancient and medieval times. Its science and reason were supposed to have given a new spirit of tolerance. But in recent years this grand illusion has been rudely shaken. A new form of cruelty arose in the most cultured nation of Europe which far exceeded the worst that history had previously known. It was anti-Semitism, a name that broadly covers all hatred of the Jew. Such persecution, of course, is very ancient. The Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Spaniards, and many others have persecuted the Jew, as we have seen. But none of these persecutions compared in the scope and terror of their methods with those of the modern Nazi. His anti-Semitism in this sense was new.

Think of the German Army moving into Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, and the terrible consequences for the Jewish populations. Immediately the Jews were deprived of all their property. Their food rations were reduced below the usual ration. They were compelled to wear a large yellow star to show their identity; this odious insigne exposed them to abuse and often the roughest kind of treatment. Then followed their deportation to great concentration camps, where on a mass production scale they were callously exterminated. This is the way one authority describes it:

"Trains of sealed boxcars crammed with human argo could be seen passing over every European railroad. Men, women, and children were crowded within hem without food, without provision for sanitation, ithout so much as room to sit down. The trip might ke days or weeks; and many died long before they ached their destination, their corpses mixed with he miserable living. Their destination was in any ase but one stop before the grave. . . . To speed the rocess they [the Nazis] invented gas chambers. Here undreds of people could be killed at one time and t low cost, and their corpses disposed of in huge rematoriums. The process was speedy and effient." [1]

But this was only the horrible culmination of a rocess which had begun much earlier in Germany itelf under peaceful conditions. It was only the outurst of a passion of hatred that had been long smolering beneath the surface. For it was not long after he Nazis' rise to power in 1934 that the following reatment was meted out to the Jews:

"No 'non-Aryan,' Jew or Christian, can be a civil ervant, a judge, a teacher, a professor; he may not e admitted as a lawyer or doctor, nor become a ournalist or publisher, nor be employed in a public rchestra or theater or film studio, nor be apprenticed o an 'Aryan' firm. All municipal employment is closed o him, and all semiofficial organizations such as gas nd electricity companies, insurance companies, banks, nd railways; all forms of agriculture, even that of a lowboy or cowman; all domestic services in 'Aryan' ouseholds; all employment in 'Aryan' firms, factories, r shops; all these are closed to him." [2]

The same spirit that finally expressed itself in his fierce Nazi persecution is found in the lesser forms f discrimination against the Jew in most of our Westrn nations. It inspires those little signs which clubs, ssociations, and some hotels display: "Gentiles nly," "Exclusive (or "Selected") clientele." It lies ehind the restricted employment practices of busiess firms that are either openly stated or carefully idden: "No Jew need apply." But it is often present n a subtler form, in the tone of voice of a friend who nquires, "Your people weren't born in this country, were they?"—"You're a Jew, aren't you?"—"I went o school with a Jewish boy, and he was the smartest fellow in the class."—"I know a very fine Jewish man" —the impression being that there are exceptional cases, but that most Jews are obnoxious. Sometimes, of course, it is rudely expressed, as in the case of a New York tourist in a Canadian camp who found a Jewish tourist next to him: "I came a thousand miles to get away from people like you. And here I wake up and find you beside me."

[1] Reprinted from *A History of the Jews*, by Solomon Grayzel, with the permission of the copyright owner, The Jewish Publication Society of America.

[2] From the London *Times*, Oct. 17, 1936, in an article "Racialism in the Reich." Used by permission.

What to Look for in This Lesson

1. Have you ever, in any way, even in the privacy of your own thoughts, displayed anti-Semitism? Analyze why you did it, what angered you about the Jew, what was wrong in yourself that you felt this intolerance. Are the answers to the popular complaints against the Jews given in this lesson satisfactory to you?

2. Why does any form of nationalism find great opposition in Judaism? Does this explain why national dictators invariably vent their venom against the Jew?

3. Do you understand this sentence in the lesson: "Any nation that persecutes the Jew will eventually persecute the Christian Church"? Why is this true? How is Christ the real object of anti-Semitism?

Popular Complaints Against the Jews

1. The first complaint against the Jews is that they are often noisy and given to self-display. They fail to sense the quieter spirit of the average cultured Gentile. There is truth, of course, in this accusation, as many Jewish leaders recognize. But the Gentiles who make the complaint fail to consider that it is more the emigrant Jew and the first generation—those affected by the ghetto spirit—who go to extremes when freedom is given them. Having been so long oppressed, they hardly know how to act. But in course of time these characteristics gradually disappear, especially when Jews mingle freely with Gentiles and are molded by Gentile culture.

2. Another complaint is that Jews belong to an inferior group of people. Attention is drawn to the poorer types, whose faces, dress, and homes seem to reflect this fact. But once again the story of the centuries must be kept in mind. How far has oppression, suffering, and poverty molded these people and made them what they are? One can scarcely speak of the Jewish people being an inferior group of people when they have given the world such a long line of distinguished men in every field of human endeavor, not to speak of the Biblical writers and our Lord himself.

3. Another complaint is that Jewish leaders have plotted to gain supreme control of world affairs. In recent times this has been mainly inspired by a document known as *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, which has been translated into every important language and circulated throughout the world. It contains the alleged statements of Jewish world leaders made at a secret meeting that some suppose to have been the first Zionist Congress at Basle in 1897. In fiendish fashion it outlines their plans for the destruction of European civilization and the ways in which they themselves will finally gain control.

But the whole thing has been proved to be pure forgery. It first appeared in 1905 as an extra chapter

in a pamphlet by a Russian official known as Sergei Nilus, who was bolstering up the Russian czarist regime. He took it from a French model published in 1864, which was aimed against the ruler of France, Napoleon III. It had nothing to do with the Jews. (Further information on this forgery may be received from Konrad Heiden's biography of Hitler, *Der Fuehrer*.)

4. Another complaint is that Jews indulge in sharp business practices and so arouse resentment among their Gentile competitors. The resulting attitude is that you can never trust a Jew. For example, a retired English businessman writes:

"They undercut all the prices of proprietary articles, sometimes selling them at cost, . . . and over and over again I have been told by my Gentile customers that they can 'buy cheaper at the Jew's.' I have exchanged confidences with my fellow members of the Association to which I belonged, and nearly everyone was an anti-Semite because of the business methods of their Jewish competitors, a feeling also shown by most British manufacturers to their Jewish opponents."

Let's get a proper perspective on this accusation. It is so easy to generalize from the habits of Jewish emigrants, accustomed to living by their wits and making the most of every business opportunity, and to assume that all Jews act this way. As a matter of fact, there are many honorable Jewish businessmen who resent these practices as much as Gentiles do. And it is so easy to forget the sharp practices of Gentiles and the way they monopolize great areas of business for their own interests. A glance, for example, through Myers' *History of the Great American Fortunes* will easily confirm this fact. The great majority of millionaires are Gentiles.

5. Another complaint against the Jews is that they were the ones who put Christ to death. Gentile children have been known to accuse their Jewish playmates of sharing the guilt of this offense. But the accusation is full of hypocrisy and without any Christian discernment because it implies that Gentiles would not have done the same. It fails to see that every day the Gentiles, as all mankind, crucify the Lord afresh. It fails to understand, as Paul so clearly states, that "*all* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (*Rom. 3: 23,* K.J.V.). Those who put the Lord to death were acting as *men,* as representatives of all mankind, and not as Jews. In fact, the Romans were as guilty as anyone else in the story of the crucifixion. It was not Jews only but Gentiles *and* Jews together who share the guilt.

Deeper Reasons for Anti-Semitism

The variety and widespread character of the complaints against the Jews strongly suggest that anti-Semitism is not an easy thing to understand. It is partly due to economic and cultural reasons: it is indeed difficult to harmonize a Western and an Oriental mode of life, and many conflicting ideas arise.

Such an explanation, however, fails to take account of the religious side of the question. For there is something in the Jewish *religion* that the nationalism of modern nations cannot assimilate. There is something incompatible with the kind of patriotism they demand. And we see this best of all in the fact that where nationalism arises in any land, it is nearly always accompanied by anti-Semitism. The one loyalty excludes the other.

But back of everything that is characteristic of the Jews, back of their habits and mode of life, back of their ceremonies and traditions, what is the secret of their existence as a people? In other lessons we have learned that it has to do with their consciousness of being the chosen people. It has to do with the covenant and promises of God. And to illustrate this claim in its oldest and clearest form, we think again of *Amos 3: 2:*

"You only have I known of all the families of the earth." Within this covenant relationship the Jew understands that he has only *one* loyalty. It is his uncompromising loyalty to the God of his fathers—a loyalty that embraces all his life, comprehending all that he is and does. And regardless of the fact that he often forgets his God and wanders astray into all sorts of worldly pursuits, he never really succeeds in getting away from his God.

But when modern nationalism demands the loyalty of the whole man, making the State the supreme authority and the final security for its citizens and therefore the equivalent of their god, this clashes with the loyalty of the Jew. It senses in the God of the Jew an enemy. And there are a great number of people for whom nationalism is their only religion. The nation symbolizes their self-interest. It is the answer to the problems of their existence. All their needs, their life, their destiny are tied up with it. And they hate the Jew because they hate the God of the Jew.

But the God of the Jew is the God of the Bible, the God who sent Jesus Christ into the world. And this explains why *any nation that persecutes the Jews will eventually persecute the Christian Church.* The Christian faith through the New Testament is so rooted in its Jewish past, so deeply grounded in the Old Testament, that it can never in the end escape the hatred directed against the Jew—unless, of course, it compromises with the nationalism around it. But this eventually means that it denies that Jesus is the Christ and proceeds to make of him a harmless, insignificant man.

For we must not forget that the name "Christ" is a title. It is a title that has meaning on only one condition—that the covenant and promises are true. If these are *not* true, if God did not really make them, if they are only certain ideas the Jews themselves acquired, then the title is an empty title. It has no significance. Therefore, when anti-Semitism denies the covenant and promises made to the Jewish people, it

denies the one thing that the title "Christ" is meant to fulfill. It, therefore, denies Christ. And so the real conflict in anti-Semitism as it gradually works itself out from one stage to another is not with the Jew but with Jesus Christ. When we persecute the Jew, we do it because of his religion; and his religion is fulfilled in Christ. Therefore, in the end persecution is a war of the evil power of this world with Christ and his Church. In the end the offense is not the offense of the Jew, but the offense of Christ and his cross.

9

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE JEW—THEIR TEACHINGS

The Scripture is indicated throughout this article.

THE real difference between the Christian and the Jew begins and ends with Jesus Christ. (*I Cor. 1: 23.*) Every important difference of life and teaching goes back to the meaning of Christian faith in him. All through history he has been the great obstacle to the Jewish people. From the time of his crucifixion, through the long centuries of Jewish life in Babylon, Spain, and Eastern Europe, down to the present day, his name has been abhorred in Jewish circles. The attitude of the old Jew, who, when he suddenly noticed a crucifix along the road, exclaimed, "May his name and memory be blotted out!" has been typical. And even though there are Jewish leaders who have said some very fine things of Jesus, recognizing admirable qualities of spirit and insight, their basic attitude has not changed. For where they face the historic meaning of Christian faith in him they reject it. The kind of Jesus they are willing to praise is one divested of all those claims which have made him the object of Christian worship.

Why has Jesus Christ been such a stumbling block to the Jews? Some might answer by saying that the Jews through the ages attribute much of their suffering and persecution to him. His authority and teaching, and the Christian Church arising out of his influence, have, to their way of thinking, been the chief source of their trouble. But this answer ignores the reason why the Jewish authorities put Jesus to death. The really decisive reason was the *authority* that Jesus exercised. Around the whole question of the nature and expression of this authority, we find the basic difference between Judaism and Christianity. For when Jesus taught in the Jewish synagogues, healed the sick, cast out unclean spirits, forgave sins, violated the strict Sabbath regulations, associated with publicans and sinners, and questioned their basic idea of purification, they sensed a new authority, which challenged their religion at its roots. Here was no mere religious reformer striving to correct external things, but a dangerous man who struck at their whole understanding of the Temple and the law and, in the most personal sense, at themselves. Therefore they put him to death as a lawbreaker, as one who, to their understanding of God and righteousness, was utterly evil (see *Mark 3: 22*).

It was not the thought of Messiahship that offended the Jew. Various figures in Jewish history have made this claim and gathered a following without unduly challenging the Jewish faith. These have been political Messiahs—all serving the interests of Judaism without challenging and radically changing its basic assumptions. Nor was it the thought of a *suffering* Messiah that offended the Jew, impossible as it was for him to associate the two ideas. For a suffering Messiah could merely be a weak Messiah, one whose failure had no challenge, no power to disturb and transform. The real stumbling block to the Jew—the one that was and always has been so offensive—is the claim that this *crucified* one is the Christ. The dreadful thing is the contradiction between these two well-known words, *"crucified"* and *"Christ."*

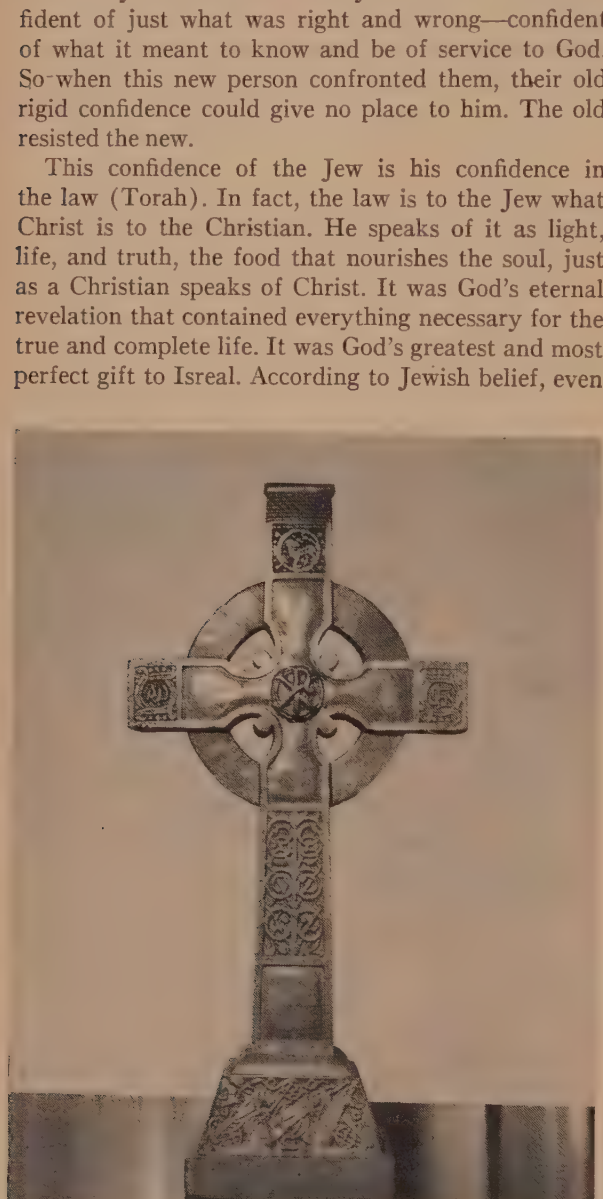
To be crucified in this case meant that Jesus was a criminal. According to the Jews he had been judged by the law of God, that sacred, eternal revelation of his will. He had been declared guilty by the highest religious authorities of the land, by none other than God's high priest, and he had been executed as an evil man—a blasphemer, an enemy of God, the prince of the devils. And now these Christians dare to claim that such a man is the Christ, the Promised One of Israel, and that to trust him is the only way of salvation.

The whole thing is so utterly absurd and insane. For if he were the Christ, there must have been something terribly wrong with those who judged him and their understanding of the law. If he were the Christ, their righteousness, of which they were so confident, must have been a most sinful thing—evil masquerading as goodness—indeed the worst kind of crime (cf. *Acts 3: 13-15*). It is for this reason that the name of Jesus has been so offensive. But in saying this we should keep in mind that Jesus is an offense to *all* men as he challenges the "righteousness" that conceals their sin. For the obvious sins of the world are not the ones most dangerous, but those which masquerade as goodness and deceive a man himself. These are the ones which most quickly destroy him and undermine our civilization.

"You Who Boast in the Law" (*Rom. 2: 23*)

Jesus Christ was judged and put to death as a lawbreaker—indeed as one who set his own authority above and beside the law, making a claim upon the lives of men that only God himself could make. His judges put him to death in the same spirit of confidence with which they interpreted and obeyed the law. They were confident they knew the law—confident of just what was right and wrong—confident of what it meant to know and be of service to God. So when this new person confronted them, their old rigid confidence could give no place to him. The old resisted the new.

This confidence of the Jew is his confidence in the law (Torah). In fact, the law is to the Jew what Christ is to the Christian. He speaks of it as light, life, and truth, the food that nourishes the soul, just as a Christian speaks of Christ. It was God's eternal revelation that contained everything necessary for the true and complete life. It was God's greatest and most perfect gift to Isreal. According to Jewish belief, even



"But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block . . ."—I Cor. 1: 23, K.J.V.

This is the Ionic Cross, which is in the chapel of McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Ill.

the Messiah would serve and glorify the law, doing nothing contrary to its teaching.

All that remained, therefore, was to apply the law to the different circumstances of life and draw out

What to Look for in This Lesson

1. Why did Jesus' claim of authority offend the Jews?
2. Why did the apostles' claim for the *crucified* Lord offend the Jews?
3. Why does Judaism feel no need of a Saviour?
4. What does it mean to be saved by grace and not by race?

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the conclusions in the form of numerous interpretations. And all these interpretations were also to be glorified. To please God and to uphold his covenant one obeyed these laws, even to the point of the detailed ceremony and tradition. Therefore, the main emphasis was placed on deeds—on doing the right deed—and although to the Christian the greatness of such requirements may seem a burden, Jewish leaders have insisted that the more requirements the better—that the law is not a burden but a joy.

It should not be hard to see, therefore, that Christian faith in Christ and Jewish obedience to the law stand in sharp contrast to each other. The first emphasizes salvation through faith in Christ alone; the second tries to show how man can merit the favor of God without any Christ. The first emphasizes the kind of goodness that *results* from Christ working in a man's heart; the second, the kind of goodness that a man achieves by himself. And the real issue between them, which Paul saw so clearly, is simply this: "If righteousness [salvation] come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (*Gal. 2: 21,* K.J.V.). In other words, if man can please God by obeying the law, as Judaism has always assumed, he does not need any Saviour. In fact, he is his own Saviour.

"One Mediator Between God and Men" (*I Tim. 2: 5*)

It is clear from what has been said that Judaism does not recognize the deep and radical character of sin. Man is always able somehow to manage it. He need only repent sincerely, and God will forgive. If he devotes himself with added zeal to the keeping of the law, this will greatly compensate. And the sin that remains can always be rectified by the observance of the great Day of Atonement. A recent interpreter of the Jewish religion has expressed it this way:

"The Jew is taught to regard himself always and ever as *stronger* than sin and the power that draws him to it. He is bidden to glory in that strength. . . . And so, even when he succumbs to sin, the Jew still knows that if he only tries hard enough, he can defeat the evil impulse. . . . 'I am stronger than you!' This is the Jewish answer to sin. . . .

"To the Christian the case stands quite otherwise. His opinion about sin and its awfulness—far deeper than the almost superficial acknowledgment by Jews

separate sins—compels him to require not only repentance on the part of the sinner, but an action outside of himself which corresponds to his sin."[1] The action outside himself which the Christian requires is the sacrificial death of Christ. On the basis of this death God offers to man forgiveness of sin. God's forgiveness is a result of what Christ has done for man, not a result of man's repentance, necessary as his repentance is to receive forgiveness. According to Christian teaching God forgives not because man repents but because of the work of Christ.

It is obvious that the Christian looks upon Jesus as his Mediator, One who has the power to procure forgiveness and who is therefore divine. The Christian's guilt is such that he cannot undo it. He cannot bring back the past "to cancel half a Line." So he needs Christ. But the Jew looks upon this faith as unnecessary. His Judaism continually insists that God is One and that there is none other beside him. God is One in such a way that his nature is indivisible and no other being can come out from him. Therefore, the whole idea that the Son of God became man (incarnation) is for him absurd and false. The essential meaning of the Christmas story is to him a lie. All that John's Gospel says about the close relation between the Son and Father is nothing but blasphemous. And all that the New Testament says of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Trinity) is denied as a shift toward heathenism. God is *One*, and therefore the worship of Jesus Christ is idolatry.

The Jews as Abraham's Descendants (John 8: 33)

Beneath the Jewish confidence in the law is a deeper confidence of being the descendants of Abraham and therefore the chosen people of God. (*Matt. 3: 9; John 8: 33.*) The emphasis is placed upon natural descent. Although a man may *become* a Christian, he is *born* a Jew. His natural birth confers on him the favor of God, which need only be confirmed by his own obedience to the law. The Jew, therefore, has no interest in salvation. By virtue of his birth he is already within the fellowship of the saved and belongs to the covenant people of God.

Therefore, when Jesus spoke to Nicodemus of the necessity of being born again, it would be for him not only absurd but also a serious denial of the meaning of his Jewish birth. And when Jesus spoke to the Jews of their slavery to sin, it would be for them a similar denial. (*John 8: 33.*) It would suggest the need of salvation, when to their way of thinking as the descendants of Abraham, they needed no salvation.

The Christian, of course, speaks of being chosen of God, but it is never by virtue of his natural birth, only by virtue of what Christ has done as this is brought home to his heart by the living presence of God. And the Christian claims that this was the way Abraham was chosen and all true Jews since his time—the succession is not one of race but one of grace. "They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God." (*Rom. 9: 8,* K.J.V.) "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (*Gal. 3: 29,* K.J.V.)

This article has emphasized the difference between the teachings of the Christian and the Jew because we must keep the distinctions clear. At the same time, we cannot forget the contribution that the Jew has made to the culture of the world. All of us stand in his debt in this regard. But as Christians our prayer is the same as Paul's prayer for his countrymen: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" (*Rom. 10: 1*).

[1] *Judaism and Christianity,* by Trude Weiss-Rosmarin. Copyrighted by The Jewish Book Club; operated and owned by the magazine *The Jewish Spectator.* Used by permission.

God of the Basin and the Towel

(Continued from page 8)

discipleship. It is the only place in the Gospels where Jesus says he is our example, and the only respect in which writers of the Epistles make that claim for him. (See *I Peter 2: 21.*) We must probe deeply if we would mine the rich ore of this teaching.

What did Jesus do in the foot washing? He abased himself completely and became the lowest servant. He accepted obediently the death of the cross, his supreme act of humiliating servitude to men. Why did he do it? Because he loved men to the uttermost. All their Judas-like treachery and their Peter-like vacillation and their human wrangling for chief places did not stop him from loving them. Where did he get such love? From the God who made him, from the God he was. Love was the fruit of his obedience to his calling on this earth.

And now he says to us that the servant is not greater than his lord, the apostle is not superior to his teacher. "As I have loved you, . . . ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (*Vs. 34, 35.*)

And it is not just sentimental love, or a passing affection, or a grudging servitude to which he calls us. It is the love of basin and towel: "by *this* shall all men know that ye are my disciples," if you can become the servant of all, the *suffering* servant of all, if need be, the *obedient* servant of all who follow down the road that God lays out, though the road may culminate in a cross. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," says Paul; and then, in his own language, he sets the basin before us and puts the towel in our hands. The Lord Jesus Christ and his greatest apostle unite in laying upon us the stringent cost of discipleship.

We may go this far, following Jesus. We may become the slaves of an ungrateful, mocking, scornful humanity that accepts our service without worshiping the God from whom it comes. This has ever been the lot of the Church in the world: in rejection, the servant is not greater than his Lord. But can we follow Jesus into exaltation? From the cross to heaven went our Lord, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and . . . every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Humiliation led to exaltation. Can we follow him there?

Certainly not in degree. We dare not claim that. Sin has a hold on us that cannot be denied. But we can follow into glory, and join the choir invisible that sings around the throne. Our "hallelujahs" may mingle with the praises of the hosts from all ages who have, in washing one another's feet, become his disciples. The reward of humiliation is an exaltation even for us who deserve no such recompense. This is the promise, this is the gift, of our God, the God of the basin and the towel.

—GEORGE L. HUNT

BOOK REVIEW

Church and State in America

Democracy and the Churches, by James Hastings Nichols. (The Westminster Press. 298 pages. $4.50.)

You have been told (and have good reason to believe) that there is a close relationship between Protestantism and democracy. You have observed that Fascism and Communism take root most readily where there has been a tradition of authoritarianism, but that neither grows well in Protestant soil. Yet at the same time you have seen the luxuriant and poisonous growth of Fascism in Germany, land of Luther, and know that France and the Latin-American nations have democratic forms of government. You have probably also heard that Catholicism claims Thomas Jefferson took his ideas for the Declaration of Independence from the Jesuit Bellarmine and that Protestantism did not create American democracy.

What, then, are the facts about these matters? What is the truth about the relationship of Christianity in its various forms to democracy, Fascism, and Communism? Just what spiritual forces and principles have created the democracy of civil liberties, of separate Church and State, and government "of the people, by the people, for the people"?

A group of Christian leaders, meeting at the close of World War II to discuss the relation of the Churches to political and social freedom felt that a book should be written by a competent scholar to set forth clearly and fairly the answers to such questions. Dr. Nichols, of the University of Chicago, a Presbyterian, was chosen for this task, and this important book is the result.

Dr. Nichols writes as a Christian in the "Puritan tradition," by which he means the tradition of Anglo-American Protestantism, present also "in all Calvinist countries." His analysis of history traces the development of liberal democracy down to the present day, showing beyond question why and how it is the product of the Puritan tradition. Not only the group who gave the author his commission, but many thousands of Christians in the churches, will have their questions answered and their leadership fortified by this timely book.—*Gordon R. Conning.*

YOUR SCRIPTURE STUDY FOR THE WEEK

(Home Daily Bible Readings)

1. Man's Sin and God's Mercy
June 30—*Deut. 6: 4-13*
July 1—*Judg. 2: 1-5*
July 2—*Judg. 2: 6-10*
July 3—*Judg. 2: 11-15*
July 4—*Judg. 2: 16-19*
July 5—*Judg. 2: 20-23*
July 6—*Deut. 30: 15-20*

2. Deborah, a Mother in Israel
July 7—*Judg. 4: 1-7*
July 8—*Judg. 4: 8-10*
July 9—*Esth. 4: 10-14*
July 10—*Esth. 4: 15-17*
July 11—*Ruth 1: 14-18*
July 12—*Acts 9: 36-42*
July 13—*Ps. 33: 12-22*

3. The Man Who Refused to Be King
July 14—*Judg. 6: 11-14*
July 15—*Judg. 6: 28-32*
July 16—*Judg. 7: 19-23*
July 17—*Ps. 118: 6-14*
July 18—*Judg. 8: 22, 23*
July 19—*Judg. 8: 24-28*
July 20—*Ps. 44*

4. The Child Who Was Given to God
July 21—*I Sam. 1: 21-28*
July 22—*I Sam. 2: 18-21*
July 23—*I Sam. 2: 26; Luke 2: 40-52*
July 24—*I Sam. 3: 2-14*
July 25—*I Sam. 3: 15 to 4: 1a*
July 26—*Jer. 1: 4-10*
July 27—*I Sam. 2: 1-10*

5. Samuel, Judge and Prophet
July 28—*I Sam. 4: 5-11*
July 29—*I Sam. 4: 12-18*
July 30—*I Sam. 7: 1-4*
July 31—*I Sam. 8: 10-18*
Aug. 1—*I Sam. 8: 19-22*
Aug. 2—*I Sam. 12: 19-25*
Aug. 3—*Prov. 3: 1-12*

6. God Save the King!
Aug. 4—*I Sam. 9: 1-10*
Aug. 5—*I Sam. 10: 1-8*
Aug. 6—*I Sam. 10: 17-24*
Aug. 7—*I Sam. 10: 25-27*
Aug. 8—*I Sam. 11: 14, 15*
Aug. 9—*I Sam. 12: 19-25*
Aug. 10—*Ps. 106: 1-5*

7. The King Who Failed
Aug. 11—*I Sam. 13: 8-14*
Aug. 12—*I Sam. 15: 10-23*
Aug. 13—*I Sam. 15: 24-31*
Aug. 14—*I Sam. 18: 6-16*
Aug. 15—*I Sam. 28: 3-7, 15-19*
Aug. 16—*II Sam. 1: 19-27*
Aug. 17—*Ps. 1*

8. Apprentice to the King
Aug. 18—*I Sam. 16: 4-13*
Aug. 19—*I Sam. 18: 1-5*
Aug. 20—*II Sam. 2: 1-4a*
Aug. 21—*II Sam. 5: 1-5*
Aug. 22—*I Peter 2: 13-17*
Aug. 23—*John 18: 33-37*
Aug. 24—*Ps. 21: 1-7*

9. David, the Statesman
Aug. 25—*II Sam. 5: 6-12*
Aug. 26—*Ps. 99: 1-5*
Aug. 27—*II Sam. 8: 13-18*
Aug. 28—*II Sam. 9: 1-7*
Aug. 29—*Isa. 32: 1-8*
Aug. 30—*Ps. 97*
Aug. 31—*Ps. 72: 1-7*

10. A Repentant King
Sept. 1—*II Sam. 11: 22-27*
Sept. 2—*II Sam. 12: 1-13*
Sept. 3—*II Sam. 2: 15b-23*
Sept. 4—*II Sam. 18: 31-33*
Sept. 5—*II Sam. 16: 5-13; 19: 18b-20*
Sept. 6—*II Sam. 24: 18-25*
Sept. 7—*Ps. 51*

11. David, the Man of God
Sept. 8—*II Sam. 6: 12-15*
Sept. 9—*II Sam. 7: 1-7*
Sept. 10—*II Sam. 7: 8-17*
Sept. 11—*II Sam. 7: 18-29*
Sept. 12—*I Chron. 25: 1-8*
Sept. 13—*I Chron. 29: 1-5*
Sept. 14—*Ps. 24*

12. A King Seeks Wisdom
Sept. 15—*I Kings 2: 1-4*
Sept. 16—*I Kings 3: 4-9*
Sept. 17—*I Kings 3: 10-15*
Sept. 18—*I Kings 5: 1-12*
Sept. 19—*I Kings 6: 9-14*
Sept. 20—*II Chron. 6: 14-21*
Sept. 21—*Prov. 3: 13-18*

13. The Peril of Neglecting God
Sept. 22—*I Kings 4: 20-28*
Sept. 23—*I Kings 4: 29-34*
Sept. 24—*I Kings 7: 1-8*
Sept. 25—*I Kings 9: 1-9*
Sept. 26—*I Kings 9: 10-28*
Sept. 27—*I Kings 8: 46-53*
Sept. 28—*Ps. 125*

Theme for This Quarter: THE NATION UNDER GOD

The Rise of the Kingdom (Judges to Solomon)

The International Uniform Lessons for 1951 ended with the lesson about Joshua. For the past six months we have been considering certain New Testament topics. Now, with the first Sunday in July, we return to the survey of Old Testament history which we put aside for the New Testament lessons. We begin with a general lesson about The Book of Judges. By September 28, the close of this quarter, we shall have finished the career of Solomon in our journey through Hebrew history. (The survey will be interrupted again for a year and a half as we study the Gospels of Matthew and John and the Epistles of Paul. It will be resumed in April, 1954.)

You will find some variety in this quarter's lessons, for they have been written by six different men. We thought it would add to the interest of these lessons to have them prepared by several writers. The name of the author of each lesson is indicated at the bottom of the page.

Lesson 1 — MAN'S SIN AND GOD'S MERCY

(In the Time of the Judges)

If you have ever moved from the place you were born to an entirely new section of the country—and many of us have done this in recent years—you know how much your new residence influences you. You lose the accent you had as you acquire the speech habits of the new community. Before long you adopt the customs of this area, and you become so much a part of it that you cannot be distinguished from the natives. Some of the customs may be good, some bad; either kind is easy to fall into, for "everybody's doing it."

The same thing happened to the Hebrew people who settled in the Land of Canaan. For them, however, the change of habits was an extremely serious matter, for God had a special destiny for this nation that could be fulfilled only if the people did *not* become like the Canaanites. And in the light of this special destiny—which extended far into the future, beyond the immediate years of their establishment in the Promised Land—their isolation in the midst of paganism was important to all mankind, not to Israel alone.

The Book of Judges tells how these people faced the problem of retaining their identity and remaining true to their God in the early years of their sojourn in what was to be their own land. Our lesson this week gives a general picture of this period; then, on the two succeeding weeks, we shall look more closely at two of the "judges" whom God raised up to be his leaders.

The Invasion

It is important to realize, to begin with, that Israel's conquest of the Promised Land began with an initial period of invasion during which only scattered sections of the land were brought under the control of various Israelite tribes. This was by no means a complete conquest but an invasion that gained only a foothold. The various tribes invaded separately and in different sections with equal success, and large portions of the land remained unconquered. The Israelites were able to take over the central hilly range of the country, but they did not succeed in conquering the inhabitants of the plains, who "had chariots of iron" (*Judg. 1:19*).[1] Nor were they able to capture the principal fortress cities. In fact, Jerusalem did not really become Israelite until the time of David. Because the Canaanite fortresses in the valley of Jezreel cut straight through the Israelite spine of hills separating the northern tribes from the central tribes, the Israelites could do little more than wage guerrilla warfare from their hilly retreats. Thus the various tribes may be visualized as islands surrounded and separated one from the other by Canaanite power, culture, and religion.

Many among the Children of Israel must have expected that the conquest would be quick, easy, and complete. When this did not happen, did it mean that God had forsaken them at this crucial time? No. The more sensitive among the Hebrews knew that God

[1] All Bible passages in this section are from the American Standard Version.

This lesson was written by FREDERICK T. SCHUMACHER, of the Department of Religion, Columbia University, New York.

was simply putting them to the test. He was confronting them with a crisis in which the issue was not only one of military strategy but also one of moral stamina. Surrounded and tempted by the worship and viewpoint of heathen peoples, would Israel achieve a new and more profound relationship with God, or would it succumb to the temptation and so disappear? This was the basic question underlying the conquest of Canaan. God permitted the invasion to be slow, long, and hard, in order to test the integrity of his people.

Israel Fails in the Crisis

"And the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah. . . . And they forsook Jehovah, and served Baal. . . . And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that despoiled them." Thus the Old Testament describes the period of the Judges. The words may sound rather academic, but when we examine the reality they are meant to describe, such language carries profound meaning.

As we have pointed out, this was a hard land to conquer. Most of the small powers, except Israel, were well organized politically. Edom, Moab, and Ammon were monarchies on the east side of the Jordan River; the Canaanites were organized into city-states, and the Philistines had an effective system of over-all co-operation among their local "lords." But Israel had no effective or unified political or military organization. The various tribes of Israel constituted a loose federation that was unified only by their worship of Jehovah God and their covenant relationship to him.

In addition, the Israelite tribes were separated one from the other by the geographical divisions of the land. Some tribes were east of the Jordan; some were in the hills north of the great valley of Jezreel and thus separated from those in the central hills; and still others were south of Jerusalem. Furthermore, the valleys, which were the means of travel and communication, were controlled by the Canaanites and their fortified cities. Thus isolated and surrounded, the tribes of Israel were totally and completely dependent upon the vigor and unifying power of their covenant relation to God. It was their common religious faith that led them to feel that pressure or attack on one tribe called for the common defense of all.

But when Israel began to settle in the Land of Canaan, it succumbed in large measure to the seductive nature worship of the local inhabitants. The Canaanites, like most of the other peoples in the Near East, worshiped a variety of gods who personified the powers of nature. In addition to gods of air, sun, water, death, and so forth, the chief roles were played by a god and his consort, known among the Canaanites as Baal and Ashtoreth. Baal personified storm, rain, and vegetation; and Ashtoreth, sexual passion and fertility. The stories told about these deities were descriptions of the operation of natural forces in which the main themes were the fertility of men, beasts, and the soil, and the recurring seasons. These gods operated according to blind force and without any moral or ethical character whatsoever. Man's task was to gain the favor of these forces by the proper exercise of ritual and by giving gifts that would enable him to enjoy increase and prosperity. Thus, if man knew the proper techniques, he could use the powerful god to his own ends and desires. The god was not sovereign over man in terms of character or righteousness but only of power, so that religion was a system of human control over divine power rather than the offering of the human will to God in faithful love.

The Israelites, who had been nomads and herdsmen, began, in Canaan, to learn the settled life of agriculture from the only teachers there were: the Canaanites. For these teachers, the cultivation of the vine, the fig, and the olive necessarily included the whole of the fertility cult ritual. The local Baal was quite literally the master of his land, and to get results one had to bow the knee to him. Some Israelites became full-fledged Baal worshipers and forgot Jehovah, for as the prophet Hosea later said, they did not know that it was Jehovah who

The Scripture Lesson for July 6

Scripture: *Judg. 1: 1 to 3: 6; 21: 25*

The Printed Text: *Judg. 2: 1-5, 11-16*

The Golden Text: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord."—*Ps. 33: 12.*

(American Standard Version)

Judg. 2: 1 And the angel of Jehovah came up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I sware unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you: *2* and ye shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall break down their altars. But ye have not hearkened unto my voice: why have ye done this? *3* Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be *as thorns* in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you. *4* And it came to pass, when the angel of Jehovah spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept. *5* And they called the name of that place Bochim: and they sacrificed there unto Jehovah. . . .

11 And the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and served the Baalim; *12* and they forsook Jehovah, the God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the peoples that were round about them, and bowed themselves down unto them: and they provoked Jehovah to anger. *13* And they forsook Jehovah, and served Baal and the Ashtaroth. *14* And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that despoiled them; and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. *15* Whithersoever they went out, the hand of Jehovah was against them for evil, as Jehovah had spoken, and as Jehovah had sworn unto them: and they were sore distressed.

16 And Jehovah raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those that despoiled them.

gave them the grain and the wine and the oil. What happened to most Israelites, however, was less clear, but none the less deadly. They mixed the two faiths, worshiping Jehovah as if he were just another one of the local Baalim and of the same character.

Gradually Israel became more and more like its neighbors and no longer inquired after Jehovah, his deeds and his demands. And as more and more paganism seeped into Israel's life, the religious bond that united the tribes became weaker and weaker. Therefore, their unfaithfulness to God produced the political disintegration of the nation. This would have spelled the doom and annihilation of the people had not God again intervened to save them.

Yet God "Raised Up Judges"

Israel had broken the covenant with its God. It had rejected the one thing that made it a people and distinguished it from all others. God was not bound to Israel. Why did it not disappear or become like the other nations around it? This is to ask the final religious question of the mystery of God's mercy, which reaches out and overcomes man's sin. God, who brought the Israelites out of Egypt, once again took the initiative, intervened in history, and re-created the bond that men destroyed. "And Jehovah raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those that despoiled them."

Israel was saved from complete disaster only by the deeds of spontaneous leaders known as judges. But let us not suppose that they were long-faced, foreboding figures in black robes! Here and there in Israel men (and a woman) appeared who had not succumbed to the pattern of the day and were not deaf to God's demands. They had no external office or tenure, but they seemed to possess, in varying ways, special gifts of God's spirit. Special abilities, such as courage, strength, honesty, natural leadership, strong personality, and, above all, their military accomplishments, set them apart in their particular tribe and gave them a position of local leadership. When family or group disputes arose, it would be quite natural to appeal to them for decision; thus they came to be called judges. But the Hebrew word "judge" also means "defend" and "deliver," so that these figures seem to be primarily heroes, champions, or deliverers. When the tribe was attacked by a neighbor or raided by a desert band, the judge rallied the people, perhaps inspired other tribes to rejoin their common cause, and led them to victory in battle and a temporary deliverance from oppression. After the crisis passed, the leader would seem to retire to his original private life.

In all probability, these judges did not rule over the whole of Israel in succession one after the other. Rather, several might appear simultaneously in different sections. In the hills of the north, Barak and Deborah rallied some of the tribes to meet a powerful coalition of Canaanite city-states. In the central hills Gideon met the threat of the Midianites, who were trying to break into the land from out of the desert wastes. Jephthah inspired the tribes east of the Jordan that faced extinction by the kingdom of Ammon. And we have also the humorous tales about Samson, the folk hero in the rolling hills of the southwest.

The judges were by no means perfect and in some cases were not even morally reputable. Man's sin may require God to use very earthen vessels indeed and for very limited accomplishments. And yet without even this much, all would have been lost. In the judges, brief moments of religious unity and vitality were restored, and Israel's foothold was preserved under the most serious threats until Saul and David, more than one hundred years later, could bring the conquest to successful completion. The writers of The Book of Judges rightly saw God's hand in history, working through these early heroes of the faith.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why did God allow the invasion of Canaan to be slow rather than swift? From your own experience draw illustrations of the fact that God sometimes works slowly to accomplish his purposes. Can you see now, in retrospect, why God worked that way in your life?

2. The people whom God uses for his purposes are not always people of conspicuous virtue. Illustrate this from history and perhaps from your own experience. Apply it to yourself also: if you are used to accomplish the will of God in someone's life, does that mean that you are necessarily more virtuous than he is? How can nations that may be used by God to punish evildoers avoid the sin of self-righteousness?

3. What does this lesson teach us about the mercy of God?

Lesson 2 — DEBORAH, A MOTHER IN ISRAEL

(Deborah, a Woman of Courage)

In a time of national crisis, when the very existence of a people is threatened, the presence of fearless leaders may spell the difference between freedom and slavery. Very often such vigorous leadership comes from unexpected quarters. The Old Testament in general, and The Book of Judges in particular, offers numerous illustrations of this fact. Deborah and Gideon, the subjects of this and the next lesson, are examples of individuals who, imbued with a zeal for God and love for their people, provided the needed leadership in a time of national crisis.

We are fortunate in having two sources for Deborah's story. *Judges, ch. 4,* gives us a prose account of her life, and *ch. 5* contains the famous song of Deborah, which celebrates the glorious victory of Israel over its foes. This victory was made possible by Deborah's courageous leadership when the very existence of the northern tribes of Israel hung in the balance.

Conditions in Deborah's Time

The time is about the middle of the twelfth century B. C. About half a century before, the tribes of Israel, under the leadership of Joshua, had gained a firm foothold in the Land of Canaan. They had not only secured the hill country, but also had pene-

Lessons 2, 3, and 4 were written by Dr. Joseph Mihelic, professor of Old Testament at the University of Dubuque, Dubuque, Iowa.

trated into the fertile Plain of Esdraelon. The cities of the plain, however, with their massive fortifications, remained in the hands of the Canaanites. It was out of these cities that the most dangerous threat to the existence of the northern tribes was to come.

After the death of Joshua and his generation, the Israelites began to settle down to an agricultural life in the conquered territory. They gave up their tents for stone houses, and they turned from following after the flocks to tilling the soil. But this change in their manner of life brought also a change in their religious faith. Inexperienced in the cultivation of the soil and lacking the necessary agricultural implements, they became dependent upon their Canaanite neighbors. In the course of time, the Israelites not only learned from them the art of agriculture but also succumbed to their religious practices which were associated with the cultivation of the soil. In last week's lesson we described the religion of the Canaanites and showed how Israel came under its influence, in time exchanging the worship of one God for the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth. We noted also that the devastating result of this apostasy was misery, suffering, and slavery. What started out as a practical adaptation to their environment ended in their religious and national disintegration.

Along with this weakening of th religious and national life, howeve came also the resurgence of the Ca naanite power which had become cor centrated in the fortified cities of th plain. Under the leadership of Jabir king of Hazor, a confederacy of thes city-states was formed. Their army consisting of nine hundred chariot was placed under the command o Sisera of Harosheth. With this army Sisera began to attack the Israelit settlements. These frequent raid forced the Israelite farmers to aban don their villages and flee into the hil country. Being poorly armed and dis organized, they were no match for th soldiers in their swift chariots wh swooped down upon them, killed, pil laged, and burned their villages, an then were gone before the settler could organize an effective defense o their homes. With the main roads un safe, trade and communication ceased Chaos reigned throughout the region

Disorganized, and paralyzed by fear the Israelites were seemingly at the mercy of Canaanite raiders. The future looked hopeless. But at this critical point there came forward a woman who not only reorganized the fear-ridden Israelites into an effective fighting force, but also rekindled in them the fiery faith of Moses and Joshua, who had led their ancestors from slavery to freedom.

Deborah Saves Israel

Between Beth-el and Ramah in the hill country of Ephraim, there lived this remarkable woman. "Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, she judged Israel at that time. . . . And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment." (*Ch. 4: 4, 5.*) Within her soul burned a passionate faith in the Lord, the God of Israel. She nourished her faith with the recollection of the courageous deeds that her people were able to accomplish when their faith was pure and not yet contaminated with the abominable practices of the Canaanites. Her zealous faith made her fearless. She spoke in the Lord's name, calling her people to return to the faith in the God of their fathers. The people, sensing instinctively that she was one whom they could trust, came to her with their problems. Some came with judicial cases that needed to be solved impartially. Others came bearing the sad news of pillage caused by the Canaanite raiders from the fortified cities of the plain. Still others

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The Scripture Lesson for July 13

Scripture: *Judg., chs. 4; 5*

The Printed Text: *Judg. 4: 4-8; 5: 1-7*

The Golden Text: "Be strong and of good courage; be not affrighted, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."—*Josh. 1: 9.*

(American Standard Version)

Judg. 4: 4 Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, she judged Israel at that time. *5* And she dwelt under the palm-tree of Deborah between Ramah and Beth-el in the hill-country of Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. *6* And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-naphtali, and said unto him, Hath not Jehovah, the God of Israel, commanded, *saying,* Go and draw unto mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun? *7* And I will draw unto thee, to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thy hand. *8* And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go; but if thou wilt not go with me, I will not go.

* * * * *

Ch. 5: 1 Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day, saying,

2 For that the leaders took the lead in Israel,
For that the people offered themselves willingly,
Bless ye Jehovah.
3 Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes;
I, *even* I, will sing unto Jehovah;
I will sing praise to Jehovah, the God of Israel.
4 Jehovah, when thou wentest forth out of Seir,
When thou marchedst out of the field of Edom,
The earth trembled, the heavens also dropped,
Yea, the clouds dropped water.
5 The mountains quaked at the presence of Jehovah,
Even yon Sinai at the presence of Jehovah, the God of Israel.

6 In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath,
In the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied,
And the travellers walked through byways.
7 The rulers ceased in Israel, they ceased,
Until that I Deborah arose,
That I arose a mother in Israel.

ame with the reports of cowardly be-avior of their tribal chieftains who ere unwilling to offer protection to heir people by resisting the attackers. On and on they came from the once lourishing Israelite villages, all tell-ng the same tale of devastation and haos that rendered that region unin-habitable.

Moved by the pathetic tales of woe f her dispossessed people, she turned o God, as Moses and Joshua had lone before her, and there she heard he command of God to summon her eople to battle for the Lord. "And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-naphtali, and said unto him, Hath not Jehovah, the God of Israel, commanded, saying, Go and draw unto mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali . . . ? And I will draw unto thee, to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thy hand." Such was the call to action that Deb-orah sent out. But Barak, unwilling to face the enemy alone, said to her, "If thou wilt go with me, then I will go; but if thou wilt not go with me, I will not go." This admission of weak-ness on the part of Barak points up the strong personality and the reso-lute faith of Deborah, for she replied, "I will surely go with thee."

The call to battle for the Lord went to all the tribes. Some tribes did not respond, however, and they are re-buked with biting scorn in the song. But the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, Benjamin, Naphtali, Zebulun, and Is-sachar joined in the battle that brought to the Israelites one of their greatest victories and with it an end of the Canaanite domination. They won a decisive victory, but they achieved it only after a God-inspired woman rallied them to the battle for their liberty in the name of the Lord God of Israel.

What Has Deborah to Say to Us?

What is the lesson for our day in the story of this heroic woman of long ago? Three points seem to be sug-gested:

1. When the people of Israel set-tled to a peaceful rural life, they gave up the stern and demanding faith of their nomadic forefathers for the en-ervating and easy Baal religion of Canaan. The result, as The Book of Judges shows with such clarity, was

disastrous for the people. Repeatedly they found themselves enslaved now by this and now by that enemy. They found freedom only after long years of slavery had taught them that their liberty was to be found only in the worship of the God of their fathers, who commanded them, saying, "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me" (*Ex. 20: 3*). In a similar way we find ourselves lured by an easy religion to-day. It may not be so crude as the Canaanite fertility cult—though the strong emphasis on sex in our enter-tainment and our reading suggests that we are not too different from the pagans of long ago. But even many who scorn crudity still search for an easy religion, one that will not demand too much discipline, too much think-ing. Or they succumb to the secular atmosphere in which they live, relax-ing their morals and trying to get along without God. The devastating result is seen in the broken homes, juvenile crimes, and lax public moral-ity that threaten to destroy our nation from within, thus making it an easy prey to an outside enemy. In many ways we can see striking similarities between the corruption of Israel in the days of the Judges and corruption in America today. And in both cases the condition arises because the people forget God and his Commandments.

2. Before Deborah could be of any help to her people, she had to awaken them from their spiritual lethargy, by recalling for them the mighty deeds that the Lord had performed for their forefathers. What he had done for them he would do for their sons and

grandsons, but only upon the condition that they forsake the sensual worship of Baal and Ashtoreth, and return to Him who alone was worthy of their worship.

Do we, in our day, realize what God has done for *us*, and does this knowledge awaken in us a new loyalty to his law? *We* need to recall the heroic and inspiring deeds that God performed through the early Christians in their struggle to Christianize the pagan Roman Empire, through the Reformers and their followers, and within our times how he has blessed the labors of men and women devoted to his cause.

3. Deborah was able to inspire courage in her people to act because she herself was willing to brave the danger. Yet in all the struggle for liberty, she never laid claim to any deed. All her deeds were performed in the name of the Lord and for his glory. It is perhaps right here that we need most to learn our lesson. It is not "I," "me," or "myself" who have done this or that act, but God, in whom "we live, and move, and have our being." It is he who has inspired and moved us to this or that achievement; therefore, we should ascribe all honor and glory to him.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why is nature worship, as illustrated by Canaanite practices, a weak religion? Do Christians sometimes indulge in it?

2. Public immorality grows out of a weak religion. This was what happened to Israel when it succumbed to Canaanite nature worship. What evidence is there that the same situation prevails in America today? Gambling is one evidence, and you will find excellent help for a discussion of this problem on page 80.

3. Do people today have a sense of God as a God of history, moving and working in daily life, or do they feel that he is unconcerned about what men do? What can Christians do to restore this awareness of God's continuing activity?

Lesson 3 — THE MAN WHO REFUSED TO BE KING

(Gideon, a Man of Faith and Humility)

With the defeat of Sisera, the Canaanite domination of Israel was ended. But this did not mean an undisturbed era of peace and security. On the contrary, greater trials were before the people. It is true that a respite was granted them. The closing verse of the song of Deborah says, "And the land had rest forty years." This afforded the Israelites and the Canaanites a period in which they learned to live one with another. But, as pointed out in the article on Deborah, this close association with the Canaanites had its dangers. After the Israelites had been exposed through these forty years to the religious ideas and practices of Baal worship, we find the story of Gideon opening with, "And the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord: and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years" (*Judg. 6: 1*). The old story was repeated over again. The sensuous and narrowly local worship of the Baal religion had reduced Israel to a weak and sectionally minded people. Concerned only with self-interest and feeling no ties with other Israelites living in other localities, the tribes were readily conquered by their various foes.

Invasion of Midianites

The new enemies were the swift camel-riding tribes from the eastern side of the Jordan. The writer of The Book of Judges calls them Midianites, and they were probably related to the people among whom Moses lived after his escape from Egypt. Being a nomadic people, moving with their flocks from oasis to oasis in search of water and pasture, they had left their old home around Mt. Sinai and had eventually reached the eastern side of the Jordan. From there they made periodic raids into the cultivated fields of Canaan. There they looted and destroyed everything in sight and then on their swift camels disappeared again into the trackless desert. *Chapter 6: 2-6* gives a very graphic description of these forays into Canaan.

Under such conditions it is evident that the people became discouraged and fled in terror into the mountains, where they lived in caves. (*V. 2.*) Whatever little grain and produce they could harvest had to be done by night. In their distress they did what their forebears had done. They again turned to the God of their fathers.

There is no doubt that throughout the period of settlement in Canaan, when most of the Israelites gave up their ancestral faith, there was always a minority that remained faithful to it. In a time of crisis the leadership invariably came from this faithful remnant which refused to compromise its faith, and boldly proclaimed its convictions. In a time of normalcy, when there was peace and prosperity, this faithful remnant was largely ignored. But when conditions changed, then its message was heeded, and people slowly returned to their faith in one God. In *vs. 7-10* we have a brief and incomplete account of the coming of an unknown prophet out of this obscure remnant. He came in response to the people's cry to the Lord, and he pointed out to them that they brought the dreadful conditions under which they were living upon themselves by their apostasy. Thus a solution to their problem was given to them indirectly. Their conditions were a judgment of God for their sin of idolatry.

The coming of this prophet among the people must have provoked not only a great deal of discussion but also some searchings of their hearts. And among those quickened by his word was a man named Gideon.

Gideon Received the Call of God

Gideon, the son of Joash, of the clan of Abiezer and the tribe of Manasseh, was threshing his meager harvest of grain in a wine press. This method of threshing shows the dire conditions and dangers of the Israelites. The usual way to thresh the grain was to have it trampled with animals on the summit of a hill where the wind could blow away the chaff. But because of the danger of attracting the marauding Midianites, Gideon did this work with a hand flail in a wine press. As he was working, he was

thinking bitterly about the whole situation. And then "the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor." But Gideon, not recognizing that the person speaking to him was a divine messenger, and his heart still filled with bitterness, replied: "Oh, my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where are all his wondrous works which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? but now the Lord hath cast us off, and delivered us into the hand of Midian." Whereupon the messenger said to him, "Go in this thy might, and save Israel from the hand of Midian: have not I sent thee?" But Gideon was not at all convinced, and, like Moses about a century before, he offered the excuse that he was of such a low station that no one in Manasseh would be willing to follow him. However, after the reassurance that the Lord was with him, Gideon was ready to accept the call to deliver the people from the Midianites.

The Confirmation of the Call

Before the messenger of the Lord departed, Gideon invited him to a meal. When he set the prepared food before him on a rock, as directed by the messenger, it became transformed into an offering. The messenger touched the food with the end of his staff and "there went up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and the angel of the Lord departed out of his sight." (*V. 21.*) Gideon now realized that the person with whom he had been speaking was a divine messenger. He became frightened, believing that he would die because he had seen a messenger of God face to face. But the Lord assured him, "Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die." He then built an altar to the Lord, calling it "Jehovah-shalom," meaning, "Jehovah is peace," or "well disposed." The erection of this altar to the Lord meant that Gideon had accepted the call, and thereby entered into a covenant with God that he would faithfully carry out the divine commission given to him.

Destroying the Altar of Baal

Now came the acid test. Gideon's first act was to begin a reform at home. He realized that before any effective deliverance of Israel could take place, there must be spiritual unity in it. Therefore, Baalism, the archenemy of this spiritual unity, must be exterminated and people won back to the worship of Israel's God.

On his father's land there was an altar to Baal, with its customary sacred pole, called Asherah. God commanded him to destroy this altar, to replace it with an altar to the Lord, and there to offer a young bullock as a burnt offering, using the wood of the sacred pole as fuel. Fearing the townspeople, he carried this out during the night. When the neighbors learned what had happened to the shrine of Baal, they became enraged and demanded that Joash surrender his son Gideon for execution. Joash refused, saying, "If Baal is a god, then let him fight the one who cast down his altar." In other words, let Baal himself punish Gideon for his deed. Thereupon, his father gave him a new name, compounded with the word "Baal," Jerubbaal, which meant "let Baal contend," or perhaps "an adversary of Baal."

Gideon's Military Victory

Without the groundwork laid for unifying his people around the ancestral faith, the opportunity to test this unity came before long. The Midianites again crossed the Jordan and penetrated into the valley of Jezreel. Then "the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon; and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer [his clan] was gathered together after him." He dispatched messengers to the people of Manasseh,

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The Scripture Lesson for July 20

Scripture: *Judg. 6: 1 to 8: 28*

The Printed Text: *Judg. 6: 11-17, 25-27; 8: 22, 23*

The Golden Text: "Teach me thy way, O Lord;
And lead me in a plain path."
—*Ps. 27: 11.*

(American Standard Version)

Judg. 6: 11 And the angel of Jehovah came, and sat under the oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. *12* And the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him, and said unto him, Jehovah is with thee, thou mighty man of valor. *13* And Gideon said unto him, Oh, my lord, if Jehovah is with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where are all his wondrous works which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not Jehovah bring us up from Egypt? but now Jehovah hath cast us off, and delivered us into the hand of Midian. *14* And Jehovah looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and save Israel from the hand of Midian: have not I sent thee? *15* And he said unto him, Oh, Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is the poorest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. *16* And Jehovah said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man. *17* And he said unto him, If now I have found favor in thy sight, then show me a sign that it is thou that talkest with me. . . .

25 And it came to pass the same night, that Jehovah said unto him, Take thy father's bullock, even the second bullock seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the Asherah that is by it; *26* and build an altar unto Jehovah thy God upon the top of this stronghold, in the orderly manner, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt-offering with the wood of the Asherah which thou shalt cut down. *27* Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as Jehovah had spoken unto him: and it came to pass, because he feared his father's household and the men of the city, so that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night.

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Ch. 8: 22 Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also; for thou hast saved us out of the hand of Midian. *23* And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: Jehovah shall rule over you.

Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, all of whom responded to his call. A force of 32,000 men was mobilized. But on the eve of the battle, the Lord said to Gideon: "The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me." Thereupon Gideon reduced the number to 10,000 by sending home all those who were afraid of the combat. But this number was still too large. Out of it Gideon culled all those who were careless and foolhardy, until a force of only 300 alert and dependable soldiers were left. With these he defeated the Midianites by a clever stratagem. Dividing his soldiers into three companies of one hundred each, he equipped each soldier with a horn and an empty pitcher with a torch in it. This torch was to be lighted later. At midnight he surrounded the enemy camp with his three hundred warriors. At a given command, each soldier sounded the horn, broke the pitcher, took the lighted torch in the left hand, and then shouted the war cry, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." The pandemonium that ensued in the enemy camp was devastating. In the darkness and confusion, the Midianites slaughtered one another; and when the dawn appeared, all the enemy were either dead or fleeing toward the Jordan, where further destruction awaited them at the hands of the Ephraimites.

Questions for Discussion

1. Baalism made of the Israelites a sectionally minded people, interested only in their own welfare and in the needs of their own locality. Does this same spirit prevail in America—in national as well as in church life? Consider, for example, the various lobbies that work in Washington for the benefit of special interest groups. How does this sectionalism reflect a weak religious life?

2. Gideon hesitated to accept the call of God. How does his reluctance compare with the unwillingness of many modern Christians to assume leadership in their communities in the fight against evil forces?

3. Gideon was able with a well-disciplined minority to defeat the Midianites. Could a minority of well-disciplined and consecrated Christians defeat the modern counterparts of Midianites, such as corrupt city political machines, crime syndicates, gambling interests, and so forth?

Gideon Refuses to Be King

This victory was only one of several that Gideon won against the marauding hordes of the Midianites. (*Ch. 8: 4-21.*) His tireless and courageous efforts for the well-being of his people won for him not only the respect of his enemies but also the love and esteem of all Israel. The people realized that in Gideon they had not only a determined and courageous leader, but also an intelligent and deeply religious man, whose devotion to God was reflected in his concern for the welfare of his people. It need not surprise us, therefore, to find that "the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also; for thou hast saved us out of the hand of Midian" (*v. 22*). A lesser man would have jumped at this opportunity to play the role of a royal dictator, but not Gideon. He refused by stating simply, "I will not rule over you . . . : the Lord shall rule over you." Gideon realized that kingship, like Baal worship, was foreign to the true spirit of Israel, and that this innovation would only lead them farther astray from the destiny that God had appointed for them as his chosen people. God was their true king, and no human creature should ever presume to take his place.

Lesson 4 — THE CHILD WHO WAS GIVEN TO GOD

(God Prepares a Leader)

THE ways of God are strange! Yet, not so strange once we remember that "his ways are not our ways, but that as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than our ways" (*Isa. 55: 8, 9*). This fact is illustrated in a significant manner in the story of Hannah and the dedication of her son, Samuel, to God. But in order to see how God's plan worked in the lives of these two persons, let us review briefly the background out of which came one of the most interesting and appealing stories of the Old Testament.

Eli and His Corrupt Sons

After the Israelites in their conquest of Canaan had gained a firm foothold in the highlands of Ephraim, they established a sanctuary at Shiloh. (*Josh. 18: 1.*) Here the Ark was kept and the sacrifices were carried out. At the time our narrative begins, the sanctuary was in charge of Eli, a lineal descendant of Aaron, who was assisted in the performance of his priestly duties by his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas. The two sons used the office of priesthood not to the glory of God but for self-enrichment. They practiced extortion and committed flagrant immorality. The people, scandalized by their greedy abuse of their priestly privileges, complained to Eli. He, being old and of a rather weak character, could only rebuke his sons mildly and warn them that "if one man sin against another, God shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?" But this warning fell upon deaf ears. The scandalous abuses continued. Then God sent an unnamed prophet to Eli, who, after reminding him of God's gracious dealings with his priestly forebears (the house of Aaron), pronounced a terrible doom upon his house. No member of his family would reach old age. His two sons would die in one day. God would raise for himself a new priest, "that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind." But the members of Eli's house would be deprived of their priestly functions and would be happy for the privilege of doing any priestly chores for a piece of bread. (*I Sam. 2: 27-36.*) It was a terrible but justified judgment upon one who had failed so miserably in the performance of the highest office under God. Instead of setting an example of righteousness to his people, and in that spirit training his two sons, he permitted his boys to grow up into irresponsible, immoral, and self-seeking individuals who profaned their holy office with impunity.

A part of the prophecy was fulfilled not long after. In a battle with the Philistines, Shiloh was destroyed and the Ark of the Covenant captured, while Eli's sons who bore the Ark were killed. Eli himself died from the shock when he heard the news of the awful catastrophe that had come upon his people and his own family. (See *ch. 4.*)

A day of gloom and despair settled upon Israel as a result of this corrupt spiritual leadership. But even as the gloom was deepening and despair was gripping the hearts of the people, God was already training a new, faithful, spiritual leader whom history was to regard, in some ways, as greater than Moses. Let us see how God's mysterious ways were shaping the lives of two people at the very time when Eli's sons were profaning their sacred office.

God's Choice of Hannah

The First Book of Samuel opens with the story of a humble religious family whose head was Elkanah, a peasant in the hill country of Ephraim. He had two wives: Peninnah, who had children, and Hannah, who was childless.

The family was deeply religious, as seen from their faithful observance of religious duties. Annually, probably after the harvest, the whole family would go to the tabernacle at Shiloh, where they would express gratitude for God's blessings by presenting an offering.

On this occasion Elkanah's love led him to give Hannah a special portion of the sacrifical meal, perhaps because he pitied her in her childlessness. This was no compensation, however; it only reminded her of her misfortune and, added to Peninnah's gloating, made the time of worship a time of sorrow rather than of joy. The greatest blessing of God for the Hebrew woman was to have a large family of sons, and the greatest misfortune was to have no children. Moreover, according to the current belief, childlessness was caused by God and was regarded as his punishment for some sin. With a heavy heart, therefore, the young woman went to the sanctuary and there poured out the bitterness of her soul to God in prayer. "O Lord of hosts," she prayed, "if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thy handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thy handmaid, but wilt give unto thy handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head." (*Ch. 1: 11.*) According to the last phrase, she vowed that the child was to be a Nazirite, that is, wholly dedicated to God from birth.

Nearby, while Hannah was praying her inaudible prayer, stood Eli, the priest. Misjudging her behavior, he rebuked her, but when she explained to him the cause of her sorrow, he blessed her: "Go in peace; and the God of Israel grant thy petition." Reassured and happy, Hannah returned home where, in due time, she "bare a son; and she called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the Lord" (*v. 20*).

Hannah nursed and cared for the child, who was a constant reminder to her of God's gracious dealings with her and with her people. In this simple faith she prayed for him. Then, when she weaned him, she took him to Shiloh with her. There, after the prescribed sacrifices had been made, she brought the child to Eli. After introducing herself to him she said: "For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him: therefore also I have granted him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he is granted to the Lord" (*vs. 27, 28*).

The happiness and profound gratitude of this humble Hebrew mother when God answered her prayer can be understood only when one realizes that this child was to Hannah, not the granting of a selfish wish, but the visible token that God had not forsaken her. With this assurance in her mind, she could bear the separation from her child for whom she longed and prayed so ardently. Now the awful load that pressed so heavily upon her heart was lifted, and she could enter the sanctuary of the Lord and in fulfillment of her vow present her child to God.

Samuel's Response to the Call of God

"And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no frequent vision." (*Ch. 3: 1.*) The corrupt practices of Eli's sons and their father's evident inability to reform them led to gross neglect of the basic principles of their faith in God: that of communicating and instructing the people in the Word

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The Scripture Lesson for July 27

Scripture: *I Sam. 1: 1 to 4: 1a*

The Printed Text: *I Sam. 1: 20, 24-28; 3: 1, 16; 4: 1*

The Golden Text: "The child Samuel grew on, and increased in favor both with the Lord, and also with men."—*I Sam. 2: 26.*

(American Standard Version)

I Sam. 1: 20 And it came to pass, when the time was come about, that Hannah conceived, and bare a son; and she called his name Samuel, *saying,* Because I have asked him of Jehovah.

. . . *24* And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of meal, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of Jehovah in Shiloh: and the child was young. *25* And they slew the bullock, and brought the child to Eli. *26* And she said, Oh, my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto Jehovah. *27* For this child I prayed; and Jehovah hath given me my petition which I asked of him: *28* therefore also I have granted him to Jehovah; as long as he liveth he is granted to Jehovah. And he worshipped Jehovah there.

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Ch. 3: 1 And the child Samuel ministered unto Jehovah before Eli. And the word of Jehovah was precious in those days; there was no frequent vision.

. . . *16* Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he said, Here am I.

* * * * *

Ch. 4: 1 And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.

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of God. The careless performance of the Tabernacle ritual might still somehow enrich the worshiper spiritually. But when greedy insolence and repulsive immoral practices within the sacred precincts were added to the carelessness, it is no wonder that the people felt that God had forsaken them. The Word of God was communicated to them so rarely and instruction given so infrequently that the people walked and stumbled in a spiritual darkness. They were therefore again converts to Baalism.

The boy Samuel must have seen what was taking place and must have overheard the complaints of the people. His mind and heart must have revolted against the corrupt practices of Eli's sons. Their father's pious talk and easy manner did not deceive him. Comparing their vocal expressions of faith and their corrupt practices with those of his mother, he could readily see that, unless faith and practice are mutually related, God is dishonored.

One night, as Samuel—who must have been about twelve years old at the time—was sleeping in the sanctuary near the Ark of the Covenant where the lamp of God was still burning, the lad heard himself called. It was not Eli who called him, but God, as he found out later. God revealed to him the impending catastrophe that would be visited upon the house of Eli for its vile iniquity. The next morning, when Eli pressed Samuel to reveal what the Lord had said, Samuel told him with great reluctance. The aged Eli accepted the verdict meekly.

This was the turning point in Samuel's life. The call and the revelation of the impending doom upon the official priestly family confirmed him in the faith that his devout mother had implanted in him through the power of God. Moreover, the revelation to him of the coming judgment upon the house of Eli constituted for him the call to the prophetic ministry. However, his function was not only to sound the warning—important as this was; his primary mission was to save. Therefore, he was to sound the warning of doom, so that his hearers might be led to repentance and return to God.

It was not long before the mountain folk and the people from the plain who came to Shiloh with their offerings noticed the beginning of a new spiritual atmosphere in the sanctuary. Eli's sons continued to insult the simple faith of humble peasants with their arrogant behavior. But there was the young Samuel, speaking the Word of God with clarity and straightforward conviction. And his words found a lodging in the hungry hearts of the people who for so long had not heard them spoken. From Shiloh the renown of this young priest-prophet spread through all Israel. Worshipers returning from Shiloh to their hamlets and villages spread the news from Dan to Beer-sheba that once again a prophet had arisen in Israel.

This good news, however, came too late to save the house of Eli and the people who had followed their leaders into immorality. The terrible tragedy described in *chs. 4* and *5* had to take place, for God's justice needs to be done before his healing can begin. But despite the awful tragedy that descended upon the people, there was now hope in their hearts, for God had given them a new spiritual leader.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why did the corruption of Eli's house in particular have such terrible consequences for the Israelite nation?
2. Do people today take seriously enough the teaching that children are a gift of God? What are the implications of this viewpoint? (In this connection you might want to discuss the article "The Handicapped Child in Your Home," page 5.) What is wrong with the idea that childlessness is a punishment by God?
3. Religious parents may have children who rebel against the religious teachings of their home. What are some causes of this rebellion? What can be done to prevent it?

Lesson 5 — SAMUEL, JUDGE AND PROPHET

OF ALL the faithful men of God who stand in strong relief to the wickedness of men, none is more forcefully portrayed by the writers of the historical books of Samuel than the man Samuel himself. He is known too as a judge and a prophet in Israel. In today's lesson we are to study three main occurrences during the adult life of Samuel: *the assembly at Mizpah, the assault upon the Israelites,* and *the activity of a judge.*

The Assembly at Mizpah

Throughout the history of the Israelites any momentous decision in the lives of the people was made at a great convocation. In Egypt, Moses and Aaron gathered together all the elders of Israel to describe to them God's plan of deliverance. During the wanderings in the wilderness, Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet God at Mt. Sinai. Before the crossing of the Jordan, Joshua called the people together for a time of instruction. So now Samuel summoned all the people together at Mizpah. This was a time of great spiritual revival that was brought about by Samuel's call to repentance and by the realization that only with God's help could the nation defend itself.

There were many memories connected with Mizpah. Here twenty years previously the people had seen their armies slaughtered, their faith shaken, and the Ark of the Lord taken captive by the Philistines. With what mixed feelings of sorrow and hope, then, did the people come together! They had been awakened to the fact of their spiritual degeneracy by the chosen prophet of God. The Children of Israel therefore drew water and poured it out before the Lord—a symbolic act of self-denial and real contrition for their sins. In an arid land such an act had deep meaning. Water—so necessary for the preservation of life—was offered to God, the author and sustainer of all things. In addition, the people fasted before the Lord to show their sorrow for sin.

At Mizpah the people whom God had named for himself gave witness to their desire to serve him in all sincer-

Lessons 5, 6, and 7 were written by DR. DONALD F. GARD, assistant professor of Old Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N. J.

y. Here also Samuel, as judge, lis-ned to the case of the oppressed and ecured their lawful rights. In doing his, Samuel presented that trait which most important for any judge: atience with a repentant people. Im-gine the devastating effect that xcessive condemnation would have ad upon the Hebrews! They who ere so susceptible to temptation, so equently victims of human passion, ould never have benefited by over-earing criticism. Samuel knew their eakness and gave them the benefit f the doubt by taking seriously their rofession of repentance. The people eeded assurance that God was with em, for events were in the offing that ould strike terror into their hearts.

The Assault Upon the Israelites

As frequently occurs, the enemies f the people of God took advantage f the time when the Lord was being orshiped to launch an attack. When he Philistines heard that the Israel-tes were gathered together in one lace without weapons, they decided hat the moment had come for an at-empt to crush them beneath the iron ress of war. They prepared their as-ault, but the Israelites heard of their lans. At this decisive moment God ntervened. Even though the Hebrews were without weapons, through the ediation of Samuel, the people had ccess to spiritual arms, for Samuel ent in prayer to God—there to ask or help. Here, truly, we see in Samuel man who talked with God. His pray-rs never asked God to suspend his mnipotent laws in favor of one group of people. Rather, because he lived in such close communion with the Al-mighty, he knew he could submit all desires to his will. Then, as a man of his times, the prophet sacrificed a lamb as a burnt offering—the tradi-tional present for approaching the divine King. Samuel used prayer, the sure means of attaining strength be-yond all human endeavor. He offered sacrifice, the Old Testament require-ment for access to the Lord God.

Even while Samuel was prayerfully offering his sacrifice for the people, the Philistine hordes swooped down upon the Israelites. Any man not certain of his source of help would promptly have fled the scene. But Samuel stood his ground and continued to pray. So effective was Samuel's prayer, so near was the strength of God, that no other weapons were necessary.

Prayer in the hands of the insincere is but idle monologue; in the heart and mind of one who has grasped the idea of his immortality, it is power beyond human perception. The answer to the prayer of the righteous man came immediately, and God thundered upon the Philistines with such terrifying force that the attackers were set into wild and unreasoning confusion. They fled in distress from the chosen people of God. All the Israelites needed to do was to pursue them—empty-handed though they were. For the remainder of Samuel's days the power of God was victorious over the Philistines.

God had helped the people through the mediation of Samuel's prayer. In grateful acknowledgment of God's power, Samuel placed a stone near Mizpah and called it Eben-ezer—the stone of help. The pyramids of Egypt endure the ravages of time and war as monuments only to the pride of Egyptian kings. Memorials of the Hebrews, however, have a deeper and more solemn significance. They established no sepulchers for the whited bones of men whose aim was to achieve everlasting glory in the eyes of mankind. Such tokens are for those who profess belief in an afterlife but are convinced actually of the finality of death.

The Children of Israel built altars to One who never dies. Jacob had established an altar to God at Beth-el—the cornerstone of which had helped him to see that God touches earth with his goodness. Joshua, after the crossing of the Jordan, placed twelve stones in the midst of the river as everlasting witness to God's bringing the Children

The Scripture Lesson for August 3

Scripture: *I Sam. 4: 1b to 8: 22; 12: 14-25*

The Printed Text: *I Sam. 7: 5-12, 15 to 8: 3*

The Golden Text: "Direct your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only."—*I Sam. 7: 3.*

(American Standard Version)

I Sam. 7: 5 And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray for you unto Jehovah. *6* And they gathered together to Mizpah, and drew water, and poured it out before Jehovah, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against Jehovah. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah. *7* And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines. *8* And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto Jehovah our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. *9* And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a whole burnt-offering unto Jehovah: and Samuel cried unto Jehovah for Israel; and Jehovah answered him. *10* And as Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel; but Jehovah thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten down before Israel. *11* And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Beth-car.

12 Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us. . . .

15 And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. *16* And he went from year to year in circuit to Beth-el, and Gilgal, and Mizpah; and he judged Israel in all those places. *17* And his return was to Ramah, for there was his house; and there he judged Israel: and he built there an altar unto Jehovah.

Ch. 8: 1 And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. *2* Now the name of his first-born was Joel; and the name of his second, Abijah: they were judges in Beer-sheba. *3* And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted justice.

of Israel across on dry land. Samuel said, "Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us." and commemorated the fact with a marker. Much later in history, the Christian Church erected great stone edifices to the glory of God. We know, of course, that all these are but vain if God himself be not the builder and founder. But rightly conceived, they become concrete witness to the faithfulness of our everliving God.

The Activity of a Judge

In time of peace the office of judge is paramount in importance. Without united opposition against a common foe, the Israelites needed a strong ruler.

For a people whose very existence was dependent upon their faith in God, the civil and religious phases of their life must be one. In Samuel the Israelites found a person who combined the office of judge and prophet in an especially beneficial way. For the rest of his life Samuel was judge over all Israel. Without scandal and corruption, he suppressed force and fraud. He traveled the circuit of Beth-el, Gilgal, and Mizpah, in each place listening to the grievances and complaints of all the people without respect to persons. In Ramah, his home town, Samuel built an altar to God.

The assembly at Mizpah had centered about the repentance of the people and their true sorrow for their evil deeds. The assault upon the Israelites had shown that God's tremendous power was made available to all the people, that spiritual strength was more important than armaments. The activity of Samuel as judge showed that God was the true king of the Israelites. Yet even a man of God may be mistaken in his judgment of the worth of human character, especially when judging his own family. Samuel was no exception. The sons of Samuel appear in the secondary role in this part of our lesson. Grown old in the service of his Lord, Samuel appointed his sons to succeed him as judges over all Israel. The names that Samuel had given his sons show the pious desire of the judge of years to revere God: Joel means "The Lord is God"; and Abijah, "The Lord is a father." Yet this hope of Samuel was frustrated. The sons of the righteous man did not equal the spiritual ability of their father. Joel and Abijah had the exact opposite virtues of their father. They were greedy and headstrong, with a lust for money and high position among the people. The contrast wa too great for the people, accustome as they were to Samuel's sober an righteous judgments. So the stage wa set for the appearance of a king amon them.

Samuel had matured greatly in th service of God. A long road had bee traveled by the youth who had faile to recognize the voice of God. Th journey had aged Samuel, the wis counselor and honest prophet of Miz pah. He had learned the lesson of ex perience. He had modeled his lif according to the direction of God. W are not surprised, therefore, to see hi last years crowned with the respect o all the people, and his judgments a to a king for Israel accepted. Throug all his activity Samuel retained hi spiritual vigor and strength. He knev that a nation is only as strong as it national character, and in his office o prophet, priest, and judge he had trie to mold that character so that th people would be true to their destin as the chosen people of the Lord Go of all.

Questions for Discussion

1. How did Samuel combine the offices of judge and prophet?
2. What was the significance of the assembly at Mizpah?
3. How did God intervene in the wars of the Israelites? Do you think he acts in wars today?
4. In what way is God king of a people today? Is he the ruler of any political nation?

Lesson 6 — GOD SAVE THE KING!

(The Beginning of the Kingdom)

ISRAEL'S first king was a man of fascinating personality. His physical strength and humble acceptance of responsibility reflected those good qualities of leadership which enabled him to inaugurate the monarchy in Israel.

Intensely human, with a desire to serve God, Saul stalked across history's plain with giant strides. His mighty arm brought devastation upon the enemies of the Lord.

When he was anointed by the priest Samuel, Saul realized that God had assigned him a job to perform for his nation. So when the people assembled at Mizpah to cast lots for a king, they were simply confirming what God had already done. Saul was God's choice; Mizpah merely ratified it.

Before the choice was made by the people, however, the prophet Samuel made clear to them what it would mean for Israel to have a king, as the other nations had. Their desire amounted to rejection of God, their only true king. With this ill-omened introduction, Samuel proceeded to the business of selecting a king for the nation.

"The Lot Is Cast"

"The lot is cast into the lap;
But the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." (*Prov. 16: 33.*)

The manner of choosing the first king of Israel at Mizpah is full of interest. Samuel directed the people to pass before him, tribe by tribe, with the subdivision of a thousand at a time. Although the details of th method employed for choosing on man are not given explicitly, the He brew text uses a word—translated a "was taken"—which shows us that lot were cast. The use of lots to decide a issue was a common one among na tions in antiquity. Among the He brews prayer was usually offered firs as an appeal to God for direction, an then stones or tablets with written in scriptions were placed into a con tainer. This was shaken and the con tents were drawn out or cast forth.

By successive castings of the lot i this manner, the tribe of Benjami was taken, then the clan of the Ma trites, of which Kish was representa tive. Finally, the lot fell upon Sau Through the lot God had revealed t Israel his choice for its king.

Lots were used frequently as means of knowing God's decision when a choice was to be made. By this method the Land of Canaan had been apportioned among the twelve tribes. Later Saul and his son Jonathan cast lots with the people to decide who had transgressed the command of God. The odds were eliminated as Saul and Jonathan stood to one side and the people to the other. When the lot fell upon the side of Saul and Jonathan, the people were exonerated. These two men then cast lots between themselves. The lot fell upon Jonathan, who was thereby designated as the one who had broken the fast.

The policies of priests also were settled by lot. In New Testament times by casting lots after prayer the question was settled whether Barnabas or Matthias should be the successor in apostleship to Judas Iscariot. It would be instructive to look up *Acts 1: 23-26* at this point in your study to see the prayerful way in which the lots were cast.

A Man Is Chosen

When the lot fell to Saul, son of Kish, the people, with breathless expectation, sought out the young Benjaminite. Their desire for a king had been satisfied. The sacred lot had decided the issue. Their hunt for Saul, however, was futile. He was nowhere to be found. For this reason they must consult God further. The Lord revealed to the people that Saul had hidden himself among the baggage of the camp. It was not a lack of willingness to accept responsibility that caused Saul to hide. If he had wanted to avoid the kingship, he could have fled the camp and risked certain death at the hands of the enemies of Israel. But Saul knew that God had already anointed him to be king. He knew very well what the outcome of the lot would be. Saul was not shirking his duty. The real reason for Saul's hiding himself was a deep sense of unworthiness for so significant a position of leadership. This humility was seen in Saul's reply to Samuel when they first met. At that time Saul had protested his own insignificance and the application of the term "desire of Israel" to himself. His hiding from the inevitable was one more indication of this reluctance of Saul to believe that he was worthy of God's choosing him to be king. Saul's early life as king of Israel reflected his inner conviction that he was ruling under God. History teaches us that every monarch who has changed the world for the better has had a similar sense of responsibility to God and man.

God had chosen Israel's king. He had directed the people to him. Saul stood before the nation with high position thrust upon him. No ambitious scheming had brought him to this place. Samuel's signs had come to pass. The Spirit of God had changed Saul into another man. His conversion experience with a group of unknown and lightly esteemed prophets was genuine. It had prepared him for his task of ruling over God's people.

The People Confirm

Once God had directed the people to Saul's hiding place, the future king realized that he must go with the men before the congregation of Israel. Saul's humility had caused him to absent himself from the casting of the lot, but his awakened sense of destiny impelled him to accept the will of God.

As Saul came before the congregation, assembled tribe by tribe, there was evoked an initial reaction that always seemed to take place when Saul appeared. At this time in history a king was one who not only ruled his people but also led his people into battle (see *I Sam. 8: 19, 20*). For this reason physical strength was an essential qualification for a leader. Saul met the requirement. He was taller than any of the rest of the people. His background as a farmer undoubtedly had kept him in good physical condition. He must also have been a handsome fellow, for he is described by our authors as being in the prime of life, and goodly.

In addition to his personal attractiveness, Saul had another strong point in his favor: the honored man of God, Samuel, commended him to the people. This was a recommendation of age for youth. The host listened to Samuel as he pointed out that all should take a good look at this man of their choice. The people looked. What they saw with their eyes was a man who was without comparison among the Hebrews—a young giant of strong physical vigor. But what

The Scripture Lesson for August 10

Scripture: *I Sam., chs. 9 to 13*

The Printed Text: *I Sam. 10: 17-26*

The Golden Text: "The Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake, because it hath pleased the Lord to make you a people unto himself."—*I Sam. 12: 22.*

(American Standard Version)

I Sam. 10: 17 And Samuel called the people together unto Jehovah to Mizpah; *18* And he said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all the kingdoms that oppressed you: *19* but ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saveth you out of all your calamities and your distresses; and ye have said unto him, *Nay,* but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before Jehovah by your tribes, and by your thousands. *20* So Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken. *21* And he brought the tribe of Benjamin near by their families; and the family of the Matrites was taken; and Saul the son of Kish was taken: but when they sought him, he could not be found. *22* Therefore they asked of Jehovah further, Is there yet a man to come hither? And Jehovah answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the baggage. *23* And they ran and fetched him thence; and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward. *24* And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom Jehovah hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, *Long* live the king.

25 Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before Jehovah. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house. *26* And Saul also went to his house to Gibeah; and there went with him the host whose hearts God had touched.

they saw with their mind's eye was a glorious future as a nation under this leader. All the hopes and dreams of Israel for a place in the sun were embodied in Saul. Samuel's commendation of Saul was the trigger that released a roar of popular approval. The assembled tribes gave a mighty shout which released itself in "Long live the king!" This traditional greeting of the people to their accepted ruler marked the public acceptance of Saul as their king. Saul's personal qualities, Samuel's public endorsement of him, and the voice of the crowd—all confirmed Saul as leader for the nation.

In theory Saul, the king, then had the support of the entire nation. The lot had been clear and convincing. Actually, however, our Scripture records that not all the people were loyal to him, though a large company of subjects went with him to his home in Gibeah. The ratification of Saul's kingship came later at Gilgal, to crown his victory over Nahash and the Ammonites.

Questions for Discussion

1. How was Saul prepared by God for his work as king?
2. Why was the casting of lots in Biblical times a religious act rather than a mere gamble?
3. Would you have voted for Saul if you had been among the people of Israel?
4. What is the great virtue of Saul at this point in his career? How can a leader of any kind safeguard himself against pride and vainglory and remain sincerely humble?

Lesson 7 — THE KING WHO FAILED

(The Tragedy of Saul)

THE tragedy of Saul is the story of a man caught in his own evil desires. Israel's first king had flashed before the eyes of the people like some long-awaited star from heaven. His future was assured a brilliant success. His appointment as king had been greeted with enthusiastic approval by the entire Hebrew nation. How, then, could so promising a beginning result in so complete a failure? The answer is given to us in the encounter of Saul with Samuel after the king had, of his own free choice, disobeyed the command of God. Our lesson teaches us much concerning the nature of God, the hypocrisy of Saul, and the punishment for sin.

The Nature of God

Samuel and Saul had two entirely different concepts of the nature of God. To Saul God was one who did not know what goes on in the hearts of men; God was a shadowy figure who was completely apart from the world. For this reason Saul believed that he could be hidden from the eyes of God and go his own way. Samuel, however, knew God as the all-knowing ruler of the universe. So close was the prophet to God that he could talk with him as with a friend. Samuel knew God's will so completely that he could say, "Thus saith the Lord," and proclaim God's plans for men.

Saul acted according to his misunderstanding of God's true nature: he broke the command of God in failing to "devote" the entire nation of Amalek to the Lord. Just what Saul hoped to gain by this is not clear: pride, a hope for ransom of Agag, a rather faulty sense of pity, or a respect for persons. What is appallingly clear, however, is Saul's direct violation of Samuel's command from God.

The word of the Lord that came to Samuel, telling him of Saul's transgression, speaks of the repentance of God. What does this mean?

The works of God are beyond human comprehension, just as God's way of thinking is beyond man's way of thinking. Yet when we try to describe God—what he is and what he does—we cannot avoid expressing our understanding in human terms. And God allows this. Therefore, if God loves the world, does he not also grieve concerning a wayward creature?

When God told Samuel that he repented having set up Saul to be king, he meant that he was grieved for Saul, not that he, God, had made a mistake in selecting Saul in the first place. God does not repent as a man does—in sorrow, with a corresponding change in purpose. God's purpose abides the same forever. But his sorrow at the waywardness of men is genuine—genuine enough to include a cross.

God is all-wise, and he grieves for his erring creation. In addition, however, God is just. No peremptory dismissal without reason was given to Saul. God's very nature forbade so unjust a treatment of man. God made clear to Samuel the facts of Saul's transgression: Saul had first disobeyed God and had then not performed the express commandment of the Lord. God remained true to Saul until the king rejected him and disobeyed him. God abides eternally true to a man as long as the man cleaves to him for strength. Saul was now liable to the justice that God dealt him. It was to be justice in the highest sense: reward for merit and punishment for evil.

The Hypocrisy of Saul

After the slaughter of the Amalekites and the transgression of the express command of God, Saul traveled to Carmel. Here he set up a monument, whether as a victory stone or as a boundary marker we are not told. He next journeyed north to Gilgal, probably to offer thank offerings to God there. It was at Gilgal that Samuel brought Saul the stern message of God's justice.

As soon as Saul met the prophet, he added perjury to his sin of disobedience, by the blatant declaration, "I have performed the commandment of the Lord." What a hardened conscience the king now had, and what a misconception of the nature of the prophet of God! Saul was hopelessly confirmed in his sin. He lied to the very face of the chosen interpreter of God's will.

Samuel was not deceived. He at once caught Saul in his falsehood. The noise of the captured Amalekite flocks and herds was the open contradiction to Saul's words. Samuel ironically asked for an explanation of the noise of bleating and lowing that he heard —sounds that were far more revealing as to the true state of affairs than were Saul's words of innocence.

Saul's reply to the prophet indicated the superficial concept of God that Saul now had. He tried to justify

his disobedience by blaming "them": by saying that the *people* brought the animals from the Amalekites. Not only did Saul try to shift the weight of blame from himself, but he also added rank impudence to his deceit: the purpose of sparing the choice animals was to offer a sacrifice unto the Lord God. This offensive attempt of Saul for self-justification was cut short by Samuel's shout: "Stop! Let me tell you what God said to me last night!" Samuel had heard enough to convince him of the king's corruption and his apostasy from God.

The prophet clearly penetrated Saul's attempt at subterfuge. He rebuked the king's self-vindictive assertion of subservience to the people. Saul had been publicly selected head of the tribes, anointed by God as king of Israel, and followed by the people. Saul's power as king should always have been the controlling voice in any decision. Yet the king had misused this power. God had expressly ordered the annihilation of the Amalekites because of their offense against Israel. Knowing this command and possessing the power to fulfill it, Saul had nevertheless flagrantly disobeyed God and done evil in his sight. Samuel admonished Saul for his sin by use of the rhetorical question and asked him why he had done all this.

Saul's reply to the angry prophet is a masterpiece of cowardly rationalization—twisted thoughts from a mind beclouded by the lust for power. In direct contradiction to the facts, Saul protested his obedience to God, while in the same breath he confessed that he had spared the life of Agag, king of the Amalekites. He maintained that he had utterly destroyed the Amalekites, but that the people had taken the spoil as a sacrifice to God. This kind of evasion and distortion of the truth sounds like the wild ravings of a man with a mental disturbance. This may actually be one explanation for Saul's completely distorted treatment of the facts of his sin. But another motive for Saul's rationalizing could very well have been a desire to bribe Samuel by offering him the spoils of war in return for the pardon of his sins. In either case, Saul's hypocrisy before God and man serves only to convict him further.

The Punishment for Sin

"I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies." (*Amos 5: 21.*)

Samuel's indictment of Saul's disobedience and hypocrisy is a high light in Old Testament theology. Amos, the herdsman of Tekoa, was later to decry ritualistic observance that had no sincerity in it. Samuel proclaimed the truth that God is far more pleased with obedience than with any supposed offer of sacrifice such as Saul suggested. To hear God and to obey him is better than any amount of material support for public worship. On the other hand, rebellion against God is worse than false preaching, and persistence in error than the worship of false gods. Indeed, it is but a short step in thought from the words of Samuel to the words of Isaiah, "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow" (*Isa. 1: 16, 17*). Saul had the fruits of disobedience—but they were bitter indeed. Because he persisted in his stubborn willfulness, and because he had rejected God, the Lord passed sentence upon him: Saul would not endure as king.

Such a message terrified Saul. He had a clear glimpse into the murky depths of his transgression. The view drove him to confess that he had actu-

The Scripture Lesson for August 17

Scripture: *I Sam. 13: 8-14; chs. 15; 18; 28; 31*

The Printed Text: *I Sam. 15: 10-25*

The Golden Text: "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."—*I Sam. 15: 22.*

(American Standard Version)

I Sam. 15: 10 Then came the word of Jehovah unto Samuel, saying, *11* It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king; for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And Samuel was wroth; and he cried unto Jehovah all night, *12* And Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning; and it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a monument, and turned, and passed on, and went down to Gilgal. *13* And Samuel came to Saul; and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of Jehovah: I have performed the commandment of Jehovah. *14* And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? *15* And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed. *16* Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what Jehovah hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on.

17 And Samuel said, Though thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel? And Jehovah anointed thee king over Israel; *18* and Jehovah sent thee on a journey, and said, Go, and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. *19* Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of Jehovah, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah? *20* And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of Jehovah, and have gone the way which Jehovah sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. *21* But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the devoted things, to sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God in Gilgal. *22* And Samuel said, Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. *23* For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim. Because thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

24 And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned; for I have transgressed the commandment of Jehovah, and thy words, because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. *25* Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship Jehovah.

ally sinned against God and Samuel. His excuse—"because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice"—had already been intimated. Now it was brought out into the open. The real cause of Saul's degeneration as a leader and as a man lay in this fact: Saul feared men more than he feared God. He had chosen to retain his power over the people by yielding to their voice rather than by obeying the command of God.

The Scripture passage closes with Saul's pathetic appeal to Samuel: "Pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord." The appeal was refused. Samuel said, "Thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel." Further entreaty, however, made Samuel relent just enough to promise that Saul could continue ruling, though the kingdom would be taken from him at his death.

Questions for Discussion

1. What does the Scripture mean when it speaks of the repentance of God?
2. What does this lesson teach about the nature of God?
3. How did Saul prove himself a hypocrite?
4. What is the real reason for Saul's disobedience to God? (See *I Sam. 15: 24.*) Is this a common reason for disobedience today?
5. Great power seems to corrupt men and make them ruthless and vain. How can the Christian protect himself from this danger and use his authority wisely?

Lesson 8 — APPRENTICE TO THE KING

(David Becomes King)

God had promised that the Hebrew people would possess the Land of Canaan for their own country and that they would be a "great nation." In previous studies of Joshua and Judges we have seen how the Israelites got into the Land of Canaan, but it could hardly be said that they possessed it, nor were they by any means great. The tribes were divided among themselves, and as a result of the disunity they were frequently oppressed by the Philistines. Even under Eli and Samuel they did not become unified. If they were really to possess the land and become a great people, strong political and military leadership was needed. As we have also seen, God chose Saul for this task and at first Saul did well. Then he forsook God and committed the gravest of sins—he set his own will against what he knew to be God's will. For this he was condemned, and Samuel was ordered to find a new and more obedient successor. Our lesson for today concerns the choice of David as that new leader and his training for the job.

David: Least Likely to Be King

When we reflect thoughtfully about the career of David from the time Samuel secretly anointed him at his father's home in Bethlehem to his final election as king of all Israel at Hebron, many years later, we are impressed by the mysterious and unfailing ways in which God gets his work done in the world. Of all the men available, David, from the human point of view, seems a most unlikely candidate. Again and again God forced David into actions that seemed at the moment to lead him farther away from the kingship rather than closer to it.

Consider: David became a popular and successful apprentice to King Saul, but his success turned that king against him. Saul tried to kill David: directly with a spear twice, and then by trickery, offering David his daughter for a wife if he would kill one hundred Philistines. (*I Sam. 18: 11, 22-25.*) Finally, David was forced to flee from the court to save his life and was compelled to live as a fugitive. (*Ch. 22: 1, 2.*) But even more misfortune was in store for David, for he was driven into a line of action that seemed to remove any possibility of his ever being king. Hounded by Saul and his men (whom David refused to fight), David was finally compelled to take refuge with the hated enemy of his people—the Philistines, and become virtually a vassal of the Philistine king of Gath, Achish.

Even after Saul and Jonathan had been killed in the battle of Mt. Gilboa, the people, except for the tribe of Judah, where David was well known, turned instinctively to Saul's younger son, Ish-bosheth. It was not until over seven years later when Ish-bosheth was murdered that all Israel turned to David. (*II Sam. 5: 1-5.*)

There may have been times when David seemed to be being prepared for the kingship, but there were many more occasions when such a possibility looked utterly hopeless. Yet now we can see that each step in David's career reveals the wisdom and guidance of God.

The profession of a musician does not seem a good beginning for a military and political leader, but it gave David a chance to get acquainted with the king's court. Saul clearly gave him Michal to trap him (*I Sam. 18: 21*), but she saved his life (*ch. 19: 11-17.*) David's life as a fugitive developed resources of leadership under the most difficult circumstances and gave him an understanding of the poor and oppressed he never would have developed in Saul's court. Even his period with the Philistines fits in. Doubtless he learned something more about governmental administration, for the Philistines of that period were better organized than the Hebrews. More important, had he remained with Saul and fought at Mt. Gilboa, we can only guess at what might have happened: either he would have been killed or he would have lost prestige in that defeat; or, if the addition of his power had brought victory, his rivalry with Saul would have been all the greater and probably would have ended in civil war. After Mt. Gilboa, David's willingness to remain in Judah and refusal to attack Ish-bosheth and Israel meant that the final union was voluntary and not imposed by force.

Thoughtful reflection on these facts forces a person to one of two positions: One either takes the view that all this is just a series of unexplainable

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This lesson was written by W. Burnet Easton, professor of religion, Lawrence College, Appleton, Wis.

accidents that just happened to come out right this time, or one takes the position of Biblical faith which declares that what seems on the human and secular level merely accidental really involves the mysterious workings of a good God whose "purposes falter not, neither are stayed." God's judgments are not human judgments. What from the human viewpoint may seem a setback, misfortune, or failure may turn out in the long run to be a necessary part of God's greater plan.

One Increasing Purpose Runs

It is worth considering that this significance of the early career of David is not limited to his story. It is a constant Biblical theme. To cite only a few other instances, many of them familiar: When Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt, it must have seemed a very bad beginning for that young man; but in Egypt he was to reach a position where he could later save his, and God's, people from famine. The Babylonian Exile and the destruction of the Israelites' homeland was a terrible blow to them, many of whom thought God had forsaken them; but men of deeper faith saw that this was God's method of taking "the light to the Gentiles."

In the New Testament the death of Stephen was a tragedy to the early Christians, forcing them to scatter from their beloved Jerusalem; yet it also meant that Christianity was no longer limited to the area around this city; it actually began the necessary world expansion of Christianity. Then, of course, our Lord's death on the cross seemed such an unjust tragedy that when the early Christians spoke of it they reported that the sun was darkened and the earth shook. But had there been no crucifixion, there would have been no resurrection and no Christianity.

And this phenomenon is not just limited to the Bible; all history demonstrates it. Over and over again the seemingly powerful, the people or events that are hailed by popular acclaim as important, turn out in the long run not to be the really decisive facts of history. Rather, with a later perspective, we frequently discover that what at the time seemed inconsequential actually has become decisive. This is particularly true of the history of the Church.

In the first century the Roman Empire seemed unshakable and eternal and the Christian Church insignificant; yet the future belonged with the Church and not with the Empire. In the year 1515 the power of the pope seemed absolute; yet God was quietly working with an obscure monk in Wittenberg, Martin Luther, who was going to shake the world and recapture the lost essence of Christianity.

In 1808 no newspaper heralded the meeting of five Williams College students hiding from a thunderstorm in a haystack; yet out of that meeting came the modern missionary movement in which there is more hope for a peaceful world than in all the armies and all the atomic bombs. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart," not only of people but also of events. In a day like ours, when so much seems to be going wrong and we are often disappointed, it is important to remember that God is constantly working, that frequently his ways are not our ways, but that his "purposes falter not, neither are stayed."

The Scripture Lesson for August 24

Scripture: *I Sam., chs. 16; 18; 22: 1, 2; 23: 15-18; II Sam., chs. 1: 1 to 2: 4a; 3: 1; 5: 1-5*

The Printed Text: *I Sam. 16: 1, 6, 7; 18: 14-16; 22: 1, 2; II Sam. 5: 1-5*

The Golden Text: "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."—*I Sam. 16: 7.*

(American Standard Version)

I Sam. 16: 1 And Jehovah said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from being king over Israel? fill thy horn with oil, and go: I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite; for I have provided me a king among his sons. . . .

6 And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely Jehovah's anointed is before him. *7* But Jehovah said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have rejected him: for *Jehovah seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart.

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Ch. 18: 14 And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and Jehovah was with him. *15* And when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he stood in awe of him. *16* But all Israel and Judah loved David; for he went out and came in before them.

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Ch. 22: 1 David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave of Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. *2* And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.

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II Sam. 5: 1 Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. *2* In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was thou that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and Jehovah said to thee, Thou shalt be shepherd of my people Israel, and thou shalt be prince over Israel. *3* So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a covenant with them in Hebron before Jehovah: and they anointed David king over Israel. *4* David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. *5* In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.

"I Waited . . . for the Lord"

There is another significant lesson in this early career of David. This poet-king had the capacity to wait patiently and trust God, even when things were going against him. But David could never have accepted his seeming misfortunes calmly if he had really not had faith that God was actually working, and working for the best. David really trusted God to the point of accepting God's will for his life. If God intended David to be king, he would wait for God to work it out; if God did not intend him to be king, David knew better than to try to become king by himself.

This is the greatness of David—his faith, his capacity to wait and trust God. This is the major distinction between David and Saul. Within the rough standards of that time, Saul was in many ways a very fine king. He took over the disorganized tribes and laid the foundation on which David later built. The dire predictions of *I Sam. 8: 10-18* were never fulfilled, and Saul never had revolutions to contend with, as David later did. In some ways Saul seemed a more admirable character than David. There was one great difference, and, according to the Bible, that was the decisive difference. Saul did not trust God absolutely; he could not wait for God to act in his own way. When things seemed to be going against him, he acted contrary to what he knew to be the command of God. (*Ch. 13: 5-15.*) David, on the other hand, whatever his other faults might have been, so completely trusted God that he accepted setbacks as part of God's grace and never tried to impose his own will.

To put this kind of faith into daily practice is about the most difficult thing there is. There is too much easy talk about faith in God. Real faith is hard—very hard. For Biblical faith means far more than just agreeing to the proposition that there must be a God. Biblical faith, Christian faith, means so believing that God is actually working in history and in our lives that we make our daily decisions in terms of God and his plan. It means that sometimes we patiently but cheerfully wait (even when things are going against us) for God to reveal his plans. Such faith is hard—let there be no mistake about it—but its fruit is the unanxious quality of life that all of us so desperately need today.

Questions for Discussion

1. Last week we asked if you would have voted for Saul for king. What about David? Would he have been your choice? Why was he a very unlikely prospect for the office? For example, do some people believe that a musician or a poet would not make a good statesman or general? Why do they feel this way? (In this connection you might look up in a reference book something on the career of Ignace Jan Paderewski, famous pianist and first president of Poland.)

2. Why is the sense of God working in history a teaching distinctive with the Bible?

3. How did David's patience find expression in some of the psalms? See, for example, *Ps. 63* ("A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah") and *Ps. 40*.

Lesson 9 — DAVID, THE STATESMAN

(The Reign of David)

OUR lesson today involves some "bloody" scenes, which thoughtful readers will question. Why is the man of God so fierce? Does God endorse his warlike nature? How can these scenes be harmonized with Jesus' discourses on "love of enemies"? These queries call for long and earnest reflection, and we cannot here undertake comprehensive answers. We must, however, consider them briefly. Furthermore, our lesson leads us beyond these thorny problems to consider what an able statesman David was and what made him that way.

Cruel Men and a Loving God

One thing to keep clear is that the historical literature of the Old Testament does not and cannot have the same tone or purpose as the New Testament has. David spoke of establishing an earthly kingdom; our Lord's interest was to build a kingdom of the Spirit, whose weapons are not the weapons of the world (see *John 18: 36*).

We need also to realize that the struggle to produce a nation out of which the Messiah could come was a struggle with evil both in and around Israel. God apparently chose to deal with such sin in terms of the historical situation at a particular time. We read of periods in which God seemed to permit evil kings, polygamous marriages, divorce, and (as in our lesson) warfare: practices that he could not indefinitely and ultimately countenance. It took time to lift the chosen people out of and beyond the spiritual and moral practices of the heathenism that surrounded them.

Then we must draw a sharp distinction between what God approves and what man *thinks* God approves. The Bible reader must be alert to this. In our own narrative, for example, it is conceivable that God might permit a warfare against the stubborn opponents of a Jewish homeland; but would he approve the cruelty that David showed to a vanquished enemy? Let us learn to peer closely into records and make reasonable distinctions between God's will and man's imperfect passions. This might seem difficult, but once we have seen the clearest expressions of God's will in Christ, we can judge that anything that contradicts Christ's teaching must be man's conception rather than God's.

As a final reflection on this point, we should remind ourselves that David is to be judged in the light not of the supreme revelation of Christ but of whatever else we know of the period in history to which he belonged. As it is unfair to judge Hippocrates in the light of modern medical knowledge, so it would seem unfair to judge David by standards familiar to the disciples of Christ one thousand years later. On this basis we may turn from judgment to consider what this phase of David's career may teach us.

This lesson was written by BRUCE H. COMPTON, assistant professor of religion and philosophy at Macalester College, St. Paul, Minn.

The New Nation

Let us review what we have studied so far this quarter about the growth of Israel as a nation.

1. Under Joshua the Israelites came into the Promised Land, conquered some of it, and established themselves at various locations east and west of the Jordan River as twelve separate tribes or family units.

2. Under the judges the Israelites suffered from their disorganization, from the assaults of the Canaanites whom they were dispossessing, and from the moral weakness to which they had succumbed. God, however, preserved them in this low period.

3. The priests, Eli and Samuel, attempted to unify the people under the banner of their common faith in one God, but most of them did not rally to this cause; they demanded a king such as their enemies had.

4. God acceded to their request. Under Saul the business of uniting the tribes took some steps forward, but he proved inadequate for the job.

5. Then David was called to carry on. He succeeded, not only because he was an able statesman but mainly because—as we said at the end of last week's lesson—he waited patiently for God to work in his own way.

It is too early in this series of lessons for a general evaluation of David's career (this is just the second of four lessons on this great man). But at least we can gain here some insight into his stature as military strategist and as statesman, a kind of "strong man" on the national and international scene at the close of the second millennium before Christ. Those of us who are more accustomed to David the psalmist might marvel at this other side of the man's personality. A genuine child of this rough-and-tumble age, David appeared to be more than able to hold his own, to give no quarter and ask none. But history has turned up more than one such man-of-parts, with its Caesars, Fredericks, Byrons, and others who knew as well how to fight passionately with the sword as to pursue gentler pastimes with the arts.

Several statesmanlike characteristics of David appear. He was:

a. *The "Big" Planner.* You have to credit David with huge schemes. He was the giant-killer now grown into an adult program of life, an imaginative and decisive man, the man of the calculated risk. If tradition is true that the Jewish people have at times dreamed of conquering the world, it is because of such men as David, who no sooner became king than he sighted new goals, who imagined that a fortressed hillock like Zion could grow into an impressive center of national life, worthy to be adorned by artisans called from Tyre. Our own imaginations have difficulty matching the tempo of these Scriptures as David catapulted his reach and power all the way to the Euphrates and up to Damascus.

b. *The Diplomat.* Decisive as David was, he had also that delicate touch of the political strategist. Don't miss some of the expressions of this trait. For example, the choice of Jerusalem as a more central point of rule than the more southerly city, Hebron, cleared him of any charge of provincialism or favoritism and moved him in toward the heart of his enlarged realm. As for his marriages (*II Sam. 5: 13*) we can believe that they were with influential families, socially "worthy" of regal alliance, and able to strengthen his hand. And the masterpiece of diplomacy was that generous deed done to Mephibosheth, son of Jonathan, a forgotten man of his day, but one whose neglect might tug at the heartstrings of the nation. Read about this in *ch. 9.* Can you imagine anything more likely to charm the mass mind than this ageless gesture, offered from genuine kindness as well as from political purpose?

c. *The God-conscious Ruler.* The statesman David could never have won the esteem of the Jews by these traits of ambition and tact alone. His most luminous quality in Israel's eyes

The Scripture Lesson for August 31

Scripture: *II Sam. 5: 6-25; chs. 8; 9*

The Printed Text: *II Sam. 5: 6-10, 17-19; 8: 13-15*

The Golden Text: "As for God, his way is perfect:
The word of the Lord is tried;
He is a shield unto all them that take refuge in him."

—*II Sam. 22: 31.*

(American Standard Version)

II Sam. 5: 6 And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither; thinking, David cannot come in hither. *7* Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion; the same is the city of David. *8* And David said on that day, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites, let him get up to the watercourse, and *smite* the lame and the blind, that are hated of David's soul. Wherefore they say, There are the blind and the lame; he cannot come into the house. *9* And David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward. *10* And David waxed greater and greater; for Jehovah, the God of hosts, was with him. . . .

17 And when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to seek David; and David heard of it, and went down to the stronghold. *18* Now the Philistines had come and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. *19* And David inquired of Jehovah, saying, Shall I go up against the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into my hand? And Jehovah said unto David, Go up; for I will certainly deliver the Philistines into thy hand.

* * * * *

Ch. 8: 13 And David gat him a name when he returned from smiting the Syrians in the Valley of Salt, even eighteen thousand men. *14* And he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all the Edomites became servants to David. And Jehovah gave victory to David whithersoever he went.

15 And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed justice and righteousness unto all his people.

will always be that of his consciousness of God as King of Kings, before whose throne he himself must kneel and to whose exalted purposes he must desire to submit. The most direct signs in this lesson of such awareness are his inquiries of the Lord for guidance (*ch. 5: 19, 23*), his dedication of gifts and spoils to the Lord (*ch. 8: 11, 12*), his scorn for the images of the Jebusites and Philistines (*ch. 5: 8, 21*). Indirectly, another account speaks eloquently of this quality, although the reader might miss its matter-of-fact statement. It is the account that "David executed justice and righteousness unto all his people" (*ch. 8: 15*). Although it is conceivable that ungodly men can exercise justice, yet it is more likely that justice will come from a king who conceives of his reign as a stewardship committed to him by God, who loves all the people over whom the human monarch rules. We cannot abuse those whom our Heavenly Father cherishes. Paul, at a much later period, had this logic in mind when he idealized the concept of the earthly king (*Rom., ch. 13*). He held that we should obey our rulers because they are "a terror to . . . evil." As men who are aware that their position of leadership comes from God and not from men, they are to be obeyed.

Blueprint for Christian Leadership

David therefore represented an aggregate of impressive qualities. Now let us avoid the less profitable application of these to political statesmanship in our time, and apply them to the leadership within Christianity which is open to nearly all of us, on high or more modest levels.

Christendom does not establish a homeland, but it does seek to advance the Kingdom of God. For such a purpose, what more could it require in its leaders than some of these Davidic attributes? Consider the following matters:

1. *Ambition.* Our Kingdom leaders need as huge schemes as David's, aiming at that goal of all history: that "every knee should bow . . . that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord . . ." Our best leaders and workers are those whose aim it is to proclaim the gospel in faithfulness that the world may know of its Redeemer. This is a "big" program, for it is a great gospel. Anyone who lacks the desire to proclaim it, who is ready to have Christianity "settle" for a quiet place alongside unchallenged heathenism, one faith among others in America or Pakistan, is untrue to the dimensions of the faith he professes.

Our ambition is not for impressive programs or large organizations. Our ambition is that the Word of God be spoken honestly, that those whom God has called may hear and respond. The work is God's, but he uses us for his purposes.

2. *Diplomacy.* This is more typically a means than an end in itself, and when it is attached to an unworthy end or itself converted into an end, it is less than a virtue. But the Kingdom enterprise can use some diplomacy of the most sincere variety. We need Christian statesmen who, like David, move in closer to *all* the people they lead, ally themselves with the ablest counselors (without regard to party or tie), and reach the hand of the Church to the forgotten men of this age: the very poor, the ultra rich, the unlovable atheists, and others whom a smaller Christian nature might choose to ignore. It is easy for the Church or its individuals, where they are secure, to slight those within or without the Church who might be considered unessential to it. We must fight this inclination. We cannot afford to offend anyone, friend or foe of Christ, except by the one possible offense of an uncompromising announcement of the gospel.

3. *God-consciousness.* David's greatest virtue as ruler was his aware-

ness of God's supremacy and prerogatives, and it should be just so in the case of the statesmen and workers of the Kingdom. A secular-minded Christian is a contradiction in terms. We become Christians only by submitting to the Lordship of Christ in faith and obedience; and this means replacing our own purposes and methods by his. Now this is easier said than done, for human nature has a way of projecting itself into its description of aims and methods; Christian leaders may often spend much energy and resources on business unrelated to God's will. Witness the Crusades, or worse, the petty efforts of the church politician struggling for nothing but his own advantage. The primary requirement of the Christian leader is that he should desire to do what is the will of God, and, in pursuit of that plan, that he should pray with passion for its success, and that he should expend himself limitlessly in its achievement. This sort of God-conscious leadership is our only hope in the Christian contest with ideologies that know so well how to employ other dynamics in the cause of great evil.

Questions for Discussion

1. Can David's ambitious program be defended on moral grounds?
2. Characterize David as a statesman. What were some of the things he did to unify Israel?
3. In what sense should a Christian be "ambitious" for the Kingdom? Discuss the other qualities of leadership called for in this lesson.

Lesson 10 — A REPENTANT KING

(A Humble and Greathearted Leader)

The historian of the books of the Kings tells us that "David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite" (*1 Kings 15: 5*). It is this "matter of Uriah the Hittite," the account of David's sin, remorse, and pardon, which we shall study today in order to mark David's spiritual growth.

Point of Departure

Our guides are the writers of the books of Samuel, and our journey begins during a major war under the threatening skies of adultery, intrigue, and murder. The Hebrews, led by Joab, were fighting against the Ammonite troops at the city of Rabbah. Under Joab were many valiant men, including the courageous Uriah the Hittite. Uriah's ancestors, a people noted for their warlike courage, had long ago come into the Land of Canaan. The commander-in-chief, by virtue of his royal power, was David the king, situated in Jerusalem.

It was in Jerusalem that temptation met and overpowered David. This man was well versed in Hebrew law. He knew the Commandment given to Moses that prohibited adultery. Yet for all his strength as the anointed of the Lord, as soldier-statesman, for all his patience and kindness in dealing with Saul, David was pre-eminently a human being. Inflamed by the sight of the beautiful Bath-sheba at her bath, the man David exercised his power as king and had the woman brought to him. While Bath-sheba's husband, Uriah, helped win a war for king and country, David the king surrendered to his lust. David was off to a bad start on his spiritual journey, but worse was yet to come.

The clandestine meeting of David and Bath-sheba bore evil fruit, for Bath-sheba conceived. David now reacted in the same way as any normal man would. He tried a strategy that would insure himself against discovery. Sending to Joab, general in command of the field forces, David ordered the return of Uriah to Jerusalem to appear before the king. Then, through various ruses and temptations, he tried to make it appear that Uriah was the father of the unborn child. The soldier, however, did not carry out any of David's plans; so the king was led from adultery to murder, as he plotted Uriah's death. David ordered Joab to put the husband of Bath-sheba in the front line of battle, the line that would make the first wave of assault, the first to mount the city walls, and the first to die.

This last attempt of David to absolve himself of guilt was founded on the hope that he could marry Bath-sheba after the death of Uriah. Joab, general of the army, took this opportunity to take Rabbah, the city of the Ammonites that was under siege by the Israelites. He made use of expendable men, placing Uriah where the battle was hottest, and in so doing, although sustaining heavy losses himself, he succeeded in giving a mortal thrust to the Syrians. After his bloody deed was accomplished, Joab sent messengers to David, tempering his losses on the field by saving the report concerning Uriah to the very last. Joab's device worked, and David, receiving the news for which he had hoped, namely, that Uriah the Hittite, was dead, rejoiced even in the heavy losses to his army and commended Joab in his reckless plunge against the city. David excused the slaughter by saying, "The sword devoureth one as well as another," and encouraged further advance against the city. Perhaps these and other similar deeds explain why Absalom could later arouse such a following and get such support against David. The people were discontent in the face of wanton bloodshed.

Through adultery the deed, and murder the result, David had attained his purpose. Bath-sheba, after a brief period of mourning, came to David as wife, and the issue of their secret union, a son, was born. David had escaped all unfavorable publicity in the eyes of men. But an even greater sin, a sin against the Commandments of God and thus against God himself, would not pass unnoticed. David, unrepentant, unremorseful, had Bath-sheba and a son, but God would judge him for his wickedness.

"Thou Art the Man"

Into the royal court one day there came a man from the school of the prophets, a man whose message from God would change the entire course of the king's life. He told David a parable.

This lesson was written by Donald F. Gard.

Listening intently to the prophet, David heard a story of cruel injustice wrought by a rich man with many herds and flocks upon a poor man with only one little ewe lamb. The story and description of the poor man and his lamb is one of extreme pathos and simplicity. Little ewe lambs were common as pets among the Hebrews at this time, and this particular one was almost part of the family for the poor man. But when the traveler appeared, the rich man spared his own plentiful flock and herds and took from this poor man his only and most prized pet, the lamb. This he slaughtered and presented to the traveler.

Immediately David, outraged at the injustice, declared that death was too good for such a man. Then Nathan applied this story to David. He reminded the king of his stewardship over all the house of Israel and Judah, of his own many wives; then he declared that David had slain Uriah the Hittite and had taken the man's wife to be his own. David heard the terrible truth. "Thou art the man" rang in David's ears as the prophet continued, showing David how he had committed this trespass against God himself. God would therefore punish him. The child would die. His wives would be treated by other men as he had treated Bath-sheba. (This, in fact, occurred at the time when Absalom was rebelling against the throne.) Never again would David's house be free from the sword of war.

Only through this head-on collision of truth with hypocrisy did David see his deed in its true light. Only now did remorse grip the king with so firm a hand that he felt his life being drained from him. He knew that the act of adultery and the command to murder Uriah were offenses not only against the decent laws of society but also against God. Still, in the midst of this dire threatening and exposure there is seen the mercy of the Lord. Incomprehensible and mysterious God's mercy was more abundant than David's; for Nathan told him to repent of his sins and he would not die.

David's remorse was given ample opportunity for expression. The child of David and Bath-sheba was stricken with sickness from which it would never recover. David knew this, but went into mourning. He fasted and beseeched God to spare the child. He saw his sin of passion being punished through the death of his child of love. But when the inevitable occurred and the child died, David astounded his courtiers by rising from his mourning, anointing himself, and coming in all his kingly apparel to the sanctuary of the Lord, there to worship. The courtiers were amazed at the king's behavior. He who had been so long in sorrow had reversed the usual process of Hebrew mourning by fasting and weeping before the death of his child instead of after it. David answered his attendants with the revealing statement that he had wept and fasted while the child was alive in the hope that God would yet spare him. Now that the child was dead, why should he fast? He could not bring him back to life. Once the deed was done, there was no help. God had done that which he had said he would do, and there was no recourse.

David had been brought face to face with God. Now on the horizon the sun appeared. The skies looked less threatening as the clouds of sin were gradually driven into the distance. David now set about rectifying his wrongs.

Repairing the Damage

Because David realized that he had sinned not only against Bath-sheba and Uriah but also even more against God, he took a step in the right direction. It was an action that anyone who has sinned must take first. David underwent a thoroughgoing reformation of character. It was probably at this time that he composed *Ps. 51:*

"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,
And done that which is evil in thy sight;

The Scripture Lesson for September 7

Scripture: *II Sam. 11: 2 to 12: 33; 15: 24-26; 16: 5-13; 18: 5, 31-33; 19: 1-6, 18b-20; 24: 18-25*

The Printed Text: *II Sam. 12: 1-7a, 13-15a; 18: 32, 33*

The Golden Text: "Create in me a clean heart, O God;
And renew a right spirit within me."
—*Ps. 51: 10.*

(American Standard Version)

II Sam. 12: 1 And Jehovah sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. *2* The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; *3* but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own morsel, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. *4* And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him, but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. *5* And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As Jehovah liveth, the man that hath done this is worthy to die: *6* and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

7 And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. . . . *13* And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against Jehovah. And Nathan said unto David, Jehovah also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. *14* Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of Jehovah to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die. *15* And Nathan departed unto his house.

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Ch. 18: 32 And the king said unto the Cushite, Is it well with the young man Absalom? And the Cushite answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise up against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is. *33* And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

That thou mayest be justified when
thou speakest,
And be clear when thou judgest."
(*V. 4.*)

He implored God to get at the root
the matter—at his own evil desires:

Create in me a clean heart, O God;
And renew a right spirit within me."
(*V. 10.*)

David did not seek an excuse for
s sins, but rather forgiveness from
od. This repentance was genuine and
d its influence on the king's actions
r the remainder of his life. From
is point on David was a king of
ghteousness, mercy, and love. His
e had been changed through God's
eatment of sin in his life. God had
anted David his life so that the grace
f God might be seen in the works of
is king.

Bitter tribulation of spirit ensued
r the remorseful David. Trouble be-
n when Absalom enticed the men of
srael to follow him in an attempt to
ize the throne. Absalom had estab-
shed himself at Hebron and claimed
large a following that David was
rced to flee from the city in face of
ne discontent among the people.

Even in his shame, however, as a
ather fleeing from his rebellious son,
David still commanded the respect
nd trust of many of his followers.
II Sam. 15: 19-23.) And on this jour-
ey David the king was a chastened
nan. He was not sure but what Ab-
alom's rebellion was God punishing

Questions for Discussion

1. Was there any real excuse for David's action in the affair of Uriah the Hittite?

2. Why would Nathan's parable be so appropriate for David? How does it apply to us?

3. Is the person who has sinned much more inclined to be merciful toward other sinners? How did David show that he was truly sorry for his sins?

4. Are there degrees of sin in the sight of God, or do all of us stand under the same condemnation? Is it worse to commit the sin that David did or to be self-righteous in our condemnation of him? (See *Rom. 2: 1-16.*) How can Christians be sure of God's forgiveness?

him; therefore, he would not take the Ark of the Covenant with him. It must stay in Jerusalem; who was he to say that he deserved to have this visible symbol of the presence of the Lord God with him? So he told the priests, "Carry back the ark of God into the city." The king had resigned himself to the will of God, and he said, "Let him do to me as seemeth good unto him." This was a far cry from the David who tried every earthly device to cover up his big mistake. This was the David of the new heart, whose resignation to the will of God abided as a testimony of spiritual strength through humility.

This strength of David was seen even more clearly in the patience and self-control that he exhibited as the group traveled toward Bahurim on the road from Jerusalem to the Jordan. Here the party was met by an obnoxious character whose sole aim in life seemed to be that of bitter denunciation of David and his house. All the inner torment and anguish of the rejected king were intensified by Shimei, who expressed his enmity toward David not only by curses and vile imprecations, but also by stoning. David could easily have listened to the advice of Abishai and had the the man slain, but David rebuked his hasty captain and showed his new self-control in vivid contrast to his former impetuosity. David's recognition of the words of Shimei as the judgment of God against him delineates the David who could sing unto God:

"I acknowledged my sin unto thee,
And mine iniquity did I not hide:
I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord;
And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sins." (*Ps. 32: 5.*)

(Continued on page 71)

Lesson 11 — DAVID, THE MAN OF GOD

(David's Religious Contribution)

THIS is the last of four lessons on David. Here we are to consider David's contribution to the religious life of Israel and thus how he played a part n the fulfillment of God's plan for mankind.

All the aspects of David's life that we have studied are closely related. David, the statesman, welded the loose tribes into a political unity, and David, he man of God, helped mold the religious outlook that enabled Israel to survive over the succeeding centuries. By blending together the political aspirations and the religious ideals of his people, David laid the foundation for Israel's immortal glory: the giving to the world of the prophets and, in the fullness of time, Jesus Christ, the Redeemer.

Let us in this lesson, by way of summary, consider several aspects of David's contribution to the religious life of Israel.

He Made Jerusalem the Religious Center of Israel

David was eager to weld together the tribes of Israel into a strong unity. This task was imperative if Israel was to survive in the face of hostile neighbors. The beginning had, of course, already been made by Moses and Joshua. But after these two leaders passed from the scene, there was no strong personality who could keep in check the tribal jealousies and also retain the foothold gained in Palestine.

The seizure of Jerusalem was an important step in affecting the consolidation of the tribes of Israel. Heretofore, there had been no city that was free from tribal jealousies and that could draw the people of all tribes to it. The capture of Jerusalem gave to David not only a strategical stronghold, but also a city that was in no way related to any of the tribes. David made it his royal city and named it "City of David." Thus, David gave to the young nation its political capital, one that was located in a beautiful natural setting and also, from a military point of view, was almost impregnable. But he gave it

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This lesson was written by DR. JOSEPH MIHELIC.

more than just a beautiful and invincible royal city. He bestowed upon his people a city that in the years to come was to be the symbol of their chief joy, the City of God. (*Ps. 137: 5, 6.*)

David transformed Jerusalem into the focal point of Jewish religious life by bringing the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem from Kiriath-jearim. This act transformed Jerusalem from a pagan city into the Holy City. From the early days of the wilderness wandering the Ark symbolized the presence and the covenant of God with his people. Where the Ark was, there was God; and when one came near to it, he came near to Him. Therefore, the bringing of the Ark to Jerusalem had such great significance for the people that "David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand," personally to escort this religious symbol to its new dwelling place. With the coming of the Ark into the new capital, the people felt that God himself was returning to dwell in their midst again. An accident postponed for three months establishing the Ark in the city, but finally, to the great joy of the people, this was accomplished.

The Scripture Lesson for September 14

Scripture: *II Sam., chs. 6; 7; 23: 1-7; I Chron. 15: 16; chs. 17; 25: 1-8; 28; 29*

The Printed Text: *II Sam. 7: 18, 19, 25-29; 23: 1-4*

The Golden Text: "Serve the Lord with gladness:
Come before his presence with singing."
—*Ps. 100: 2.*

(American Standard Version)

II Sam. 7: 18 Then David the king went in, and sat before Jehovah; and he said, Who am I, O Lord Jehovah, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me thus far? *19* And this was yet a small thing in thine eyes, O Lord Jehovah; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come; and this *too* after the manner of men, O Lord Jehovah! . . . *25* And now, O Jehovah God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, confirm thou it for ever, and do as thou hast spoken. *26* And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, Jehovah of hosts is God over Israel; and the house of thy servant David shall be established before thee. *27* For thou, O Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee a house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee. *28* And now, O Lord Jehovah, thou art God, and thy words are truth, and thou hast promised this good thing unto thy servant: *29* now therefore let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee; for thou, O Lord Jehovah, hast spoken it: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.

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Ch. 23: 1 Now these are the last words of David.
David the son of Jesse saith,
And the man who was raised on high saith,
The anointed of the God of Jacob,
And the sweet psalmist of Israel:
2 The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me,
And his word was upon my tongue.
3 The God of Israel said,
The Rock of Israel spake to me:
One that ruleth over men righteously,
That ruleth in the fear of God,
4 *He shall be* as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth,
A morning without clouds,
When the tender grass *springeth* out of the earth,
Through clear shining after rain.

He Established Worship at Jerusalem

However, just bringing the Ark t Jerusalem was not enough to make th city the religious center of Israel. Th presence of this venerable religiou symbol required the institution o regular worship which would give ex pression to the religious feelings o the people. The presence of Goo which the Ark symbolized for them evoked in the people a profound feel ing of joy. This deeply felt happines found its natural outlet in the singin of hymns of praise and thanksgiving Although our information about th nature of Hebrew worship in this pe riod is lacking, from such meager in formation as we have, we are able t get an idea of the type of worshi that David instituted in Jerusalem *I Chronicles 16: 4-6, 37-42* tells u that David established two types o daily worship services. The first was musical service before the Ark in Jeru salem, and the second was a servic of offering animal sacrifices before th Tabernacle, which was located on high place near Gibeon, not far fron Jerusalem.

The musical service was performe before the Ark and consisted of sing ing psalms of praise and thanksgiving accompanied by various musical in struments. The psalms used in thes services were most likely composed b Asaph and his guild of singers an musicians. There are twelve psalm (*Ps. 50; 73 to 83*) ascribed to Asaph Tradition also assigns the compositio of a large number of psalms to David The people of a later day regarde David not only as the father of He brew psalmody, but also as the kin who had fostered the music used i worship.

The worship at which animal sacr fices were made consisted of mornin and evening services. The Hebre idea of sacrifice was to bring an of fering to God for the purpose of ex pressing the complete devotion t God, of cementing the covenant, o of seeking the restoration of the cove nant when broken by sin. Accordin to the Levitical system, there wer three kinds of sacrifices: (1) anima (2) vegetable, and (3) drink.

The two separate worship service the musical and the sacrificial, wer continued at the separate localitie until Solomon built the Temple. Th Temple was erected on Mt. Moriah at the place where David had set u

an altar in the threshing floor of Araunah for the purpose of staying off the plague. (*II Sam. 24: 18-25.*) Then, when the Ark of the Covenant was brought out of the temporary tabernacle and deposited in the newly constructed sanctuary, the services were held there. (*I Kings, ch. 8.*)

David from the Perspective of History

The bringing of the Ark to Jerusalem and the establishment and fostering of daily worship had far-reaching effects in the thinking of later generations. It helped to unify the people into a nation, and it also made Jerusalem itself a symbol of their achievements and their dreams. All this, however, was closely linked with David. To later ages he became the paragon of all virtue and therefore the source of their hopes and dreams. David was in their eyes the ideal king, and his kingdom symbolized to them the everlasting Kingdom of God. People saw in him a king who had been completely devoted to God, and who had enjoyed a unique place in his favor. The kings who followed him were evaluated from this point of view. Each of these kings either "did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did David his father," or, in most cases, "did not that which was right in the eyes of the Lord his God, like David his father" (*I Kings 15: 11; II Kings 16: 2*). Moreover, the people felt that God had spared them repeatedly "for David's sake." As they viewed the empire of David in retrospect across the centuries, it appeared as a golden age, with David as the ideal king. In his day justice and prosperity reigned on earth. He had protected the poor and the oppressed. His armies conquered the enemies and forced them to submit to the rule of David, the Lord's anointed.

However, their faith in God inspired in them the conviction that God would again restore his people to their greatness of David's day. He had redeemed them from Egypt. At Mt. Sinai he had made a covenant with them. He had given them the Land of Canaan, and through his servant David he had made them an important nation. Therefore, what God had done in the past, he would do again

(Continued on page 74)

Questions for Discussion

1. Why was the establishing of Jerusalem as a spiritual center especially important to the Hebrews?
2. How can you account for the fact that such a sinner as David became the figure for the ideal king and that Christ would be acclaimed as "Son of David"?
3. How does Christ's Kingdom differ from David's kingdom?

Lesson 12 — A KING SEEKS WISDOM

(Solomon Begins His Reign)

THERE were two Solomons—as there are two of each of us—the ideal Solomon and the actual Solomon. The tragedy of Solomon's life was that he departed from, rather than grew toward, his ideal self. And the tragedy of Solomon became the tragedy of the nation. The life of Solomon, therefore, poses an urgent question: Can man possess prosperity, power, and peace without allowing them to degenerate into sensuality, tyranny, and war?

Solomon was "born to the purple." The war of independence had been won. The kingdom was established. The people were unified by the physical force, the intellectual insight, the attractive personality, and the spiritual greatness of David. The pioneers had done their work. It remained for the heirs to consolidate and exploit their heritage to the full.

Solomon ascended the throne about 970 B.C., having been appointed by David himself shortly before the latter's death. In the early period of Solomon's forty-year reign, it must have seemed to Israel that Hebrew history had reached its consummation. The promise to Abraham of a great offspring was realized. The Promised Land of Moses was occupied. And God now appeared ready to come to earth to live with his people, for Solomon had been instructed to build him a dwelling place, the Temple. The people received him with great joy and anticipation. The golden age had arrived.

The basic principles in the divine constitution for this new state were clearly perceived by the new monarch. The pioneers had left a spiritual as well as a physical heritage. They indeed had suffered the material hardships of pilgrims in a strange and hostile land and by main force had hewed out a spot in which to live. But in the heat of the battle they had also forged the spiritual weapons by which their heirs were to maintain themselves. In his last words to his son and successor, the dying David once again reiterated, as with foreboding, the crucial need of holding to these basic ideal principles. That Solomon clearly grasped these guiding ideals is revealed in the passionate prayers that fell from his lips and the high dreams that filled his mind in those first years of consecrated service in his high calling. In those dreams and prayers are expressed the political ideals that derive from the Hebrew-Christian tradition. Let us look at them briefly.

Government of God

No human government is the ultimate authority in the lives of men. This was the first thing that Solomon clearly understood about his job of being king. He knew this from personal history. As the favorite son, and reared during the easygoing, peaceful years of the patriarch's long life, Solomon must have spent many a lazy afternoon, listening to the tales of the old days from the lips of his father and his trusted cohorts. Moreover, it was the religious duty of the Hebrew father to instruct his son in the traditions of the people. So Solomon knew, what we have seen in the earlier lessons, that the time had been when there were no kings in Israel, when God himself was king, and when the laws of God were the only laws that the people knew and God alone enforced them. Solomon remembered that the old prophet, Samuel, had warned the people against a human king who might become corrupt and tyrannical, and he learned how Sam-

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Lessons 12 and 13 were written by DR. ARNOLD B. COME, professor of religion, Centre College, Danville, Ky.

uel had looked upon even a God-anointed king as a poor substitute and as a dangerous compromise of the traditions of Israel.

The youthful king was all the more determined, therefore, to avoid the pitfalls that lie in the path of any human who possesses great power over the lives of other men. He frankly, even passionately, proclaimed that he was a regent for God, that his power and authority were delegated to him by God. "O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king." (*I Kings 3: 7.*) It was not really his government, or Israel's government, but God's government. "Thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen." (*V. 8.*) In his beautiful words to God and to Israel at the dedication of the Temple (*ch. 8*), Solomon reminded the people that their existence as a nation was the result of God's activity, that it was from God that their purpose and destiny were derived. Solomon at this point in his career recognized that insistence upon absolute national sovereignty amounts to a deifying of both the man and the state. He perceived that the national sovereignty of Israel had strict limitations within the broader universal purposes of God, and that Israel would remain a free and sovereign people only as long as it abided by the terms of its covenant under God.

Solomon did not extend this political theory to all the governments of his day. Jehovah was still the God of Israel in a special way, and Israel alone was his people. The great prophets who followed in the next two centuries began to speculate about God's relations with other political powers besides Israel. But it was Paul who, a thousand years after Solomon, universalized the Hebrew idea of government and applied it to all Gentile peoples. "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers," he wrote to the Christians in Rome, "for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God." (*Rom. 13: 1.*)

This theory of government gives the state a very exalted position as the instrument of God. It is God's instrument, however, only as it is his *servant*, as it serves *his* purposes. The privilege and responsibility of being a leader in government is, therefore, something bestowed by God for fulfilling his will. This is the principle understood by young Solomon and passed on to us in the teaching of God's Word.

Government by God

No human government is above criticism. The fact that a government is a theocracy (i.e., a government in the *name* of God) is no guarantee that the government will remain sensitive to the will of God or will not become tyrannical. Indeed, theocracies have been notoriously autocratic, and their leaders have often manifested human bigotry and self-righteousness in ugly and cruel demonstrations that, they say, are the administration of the justice of God. The monarchs who ruled by the "divine right of kings" give numerous illustrations, and even the records of the Protestant governments at Geneva and Massachusetts Bay are far from being clean of such stains.

Solomon gave evidence of his real wisdom in his recognition of the dangers of theocracy. He knew that good government must be not only *of* God but also *by* God. The human will must never assume that it possesses the divine will once and for all; nor ought the human intellect to believe that it is infallible in determining the means for the realization of God's will. So Solomon humbly confessed his incompetence for the enormous task before him and asked above all else for "an understanding heart to . . . discern between good and evil" (*I Kings 3: 9*). He vowed that he would rule under the guidance of the ancient covenant

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The Scripture Lesson for September 21

Scripture: *I Kings 1: 28-40; 2: 1-4; 3: 1-15; 5: 1 to 6: 14; ch. 8; II Chron., chs. 5; 6*

The Printed Text: *I Kings 3: 5-15*

The Golden Text: "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart,
And lean not upon thine own understanding:
In all thy ways acknowledge him,
And he will direct thy paths."
—*Prov. 3: 5, 6.*

(American Standard Version)

I Kings 3: 5 In Gibeon Jehovah appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. *6* And Solomon said, Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great lovingkindness, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great lovingkindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. *7* And now, O Jehovah my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in. *8* And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. *9* Give thy servant therefore an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to judge this thy great people?

10 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. *11* And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies, but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern justice; *12* behold, I have done according to thy word: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there hath been none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. *13* And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor, so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee, all thy days. *14* And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days. *15* And, Solomon awoke; and behold, it was a dream: and he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, and offered up burnt-offerings, and offered peace-offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why was Solomon better equipped to be king than Adonijah? Does it always follow, however, that one born in the royal situation will make a better leader than the person born and reared under humble circumstances?

2. How does the United States recognize its responsibility to God in its Constitution? Is it a government of God in practice as well as in theory? If it is a government "of God," should it exclude religious instruction in its schools?

3. Thinking of government "by God," how should the Church exert its influence in the state capitals of our country? Should we maintain a Church lobby in Washington?

4. How can a government serve the needs of all its people and still protect individual enterprise and initiative? This is the practical question that Solomon faced in forming a government for the people.

d according to the statutes, ordi-nances, and commandments of God. nd finally he built the Temple, a welling place for God. But even in is action he was not fooled into inking that the presence of the emple and its services guaranteed a overnment *by* God. "Will God in ery deed dwell on the earth?" the ung king cried out. "Behold, heaven nd the heaven of heavens cannot ontain thee; how much less this ouse that I have builded!" (*Ch. 8: 7.*) So the Temple would simply erve as a place where the king and he people could go to wait on the ord in prayer and to receive day by ay his guidance, that both king and eople would truly be governed *by* od. The spiritual consciousness of he human heart, stimulated and nur-ured by the truth of God's Word, was o be the perennial source of criticism f human government, even of gov-rnment in the name of God.

Solomon had one other principle to uide him as king. His government vas to be of God and by God, but for he people.

Government for the People

No human government is an end in tself. The state does not exist to xalt the state. Men are organized olitically merely as a means to meet he needs and to promote the welfare f the citizens as individuals.

Solomon and the Hebrews had a ong tradition of "government for the eople." Israel was really a consolida-ion of a number of nomadic desert ribes. These tribes had forced their way out of the harsh and cruel desert nto the plush fertility of Canaan. United by a common religion, they succeeded not only in conquering the nhabitants of the land but also in maintaining much of their independence of thought and action. They had strong traditions of individualism and equality. One individual's will could never be subjected to another's; it could be overridden only by the group. The possession of power by the tribal leader himself was justified only by the needs of the group. The ruler had duties as well as rights, responsibilities as well as privileges. Hence, when the Israelites established a hereditary monarchy, a new type of government made its appearance in the ancient East. A "limited monarchy" was unknown and appeared to be a contradiction in terms to the Oriental potentates of that time. To Israel it appeared to be a guard, and, it hoped, a safe compromise with its desert heritage. If the sovereign power could be reminded constantly that his authority was delegated to him of and by God and for the people, he could contribute to the national life all the advantages of strong central government and yet avoid the danger of tyranny.

Solomon's reputation for greatness, as based upon his early career, arose precisely from his sense of duty to the people. As king he was overwhelmingly aware of being "in the midst of thy [God's] people." His heart's desire was simply for "an understanding heart to judge thy people"—a task of such magnitude and difficulty that, before it, he felt reduced to "a little child." In his long prayer at the dedication of the Temple, Solomon strictly identified his destiny as king with the welfare of the people. His prayer sounds almost like a marriage vow in which he promised to devote his life to Israel "for richer for poorer."

So Solomon's reign opened with great promise. The ideal of a government that was dedicated to the interests of the people, directed by the wisdom of God and preserved by his power, seemed to lie in the immediate future. That such an ideal was not realized by Israel is common knowledge. That we are still far from realizing that ideal is the bitter experience of our own day. Perhaps an analysis of Solomon's failure in the next lesson can give us an insight into the weaknesses and dangers of our own situation.

Lesson 10—A Repentant King

(Continued from page 67)

Followed by this ill-tempered man, feeling the sting of dust and rocks that Shimei threw at the group, David wearily marched on, the stronger because of his open, humble acceptance of a rebuke sent from God.

Meanwhile, Absalom had claimed the rights of king in Jerusalem. By taking over the harem of his father, he had fulfilled the prediction of Nathan as to the open defiling of David's wives. But in battle with the forces of David, Absalom was killed and his followers were routed. In former times, such news would have given David cause for great rejoicing. But since he had made express command that the life of Absalom was to be spared, his lamentation knew no bounds. What a different man was this David from the one who had sent Uriah to his death! No "eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth," was this. David had learned the measure of forgiveness that God had given him, and his desire to return this same measure to his rebellious son Absalom had been brought to naught. Well might King David cry for Absalom his son!

Individual life had taken on new worth in the eyes of David. Thus it was that when Shimei offered a craven apology for having cursed the Lord's anointed, David remembered his own deep sin and the mercy of God. So Shimei was spared. David had repaired the damage as well as he could. He had shown mercy and forgiveness to those who had wilfully wronged him or openly reviled him.

This new David truly was one who should by his example give strength to us today. The repentant king showed the spiritual growth of the man "after God's own heart"—a preeminently human and likable man, who learned from his past mistakes how a citizen of heaven should behave himself on earth.

Lesson 13 — THE PERIL OF NEGLECTING GOD

(The Glory of Solomon's Empire)

SOMETHING went wrong, radically wrong! In *I Kings, ch. 10,* the author can hardly restrain himself as he tries to describe the scintillating glory, the overwhelming greatness and success, the dazzling splendor, the all-embracing expanse of Solomon's reign. We behold the dramatic pageant of the visit by the Queen of Sheba and hear her breathless confession, "I believed not . . . until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me" (*v. 7*). Finally, we have the summarizing climax: "So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. And all the earth sought the presence of Solomon" (*chs. 4: 20, 21; 10: 23, 24*). Then, like the rude crash of cymbals at the end of a symphony of praise, like a shimmering temple suddenly shuddering, cracking, and falling into dust and ruins, the end of Solomon's dream is briefly recounted by the author: "And Jehovah was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned away from Jehovah, the God of Israel. . . . Wherefore Jehovah said unto Solomon, . . . I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant" (*ch. 11: 9, 11*).

This sharp contrast reminds us, if we are sensitive to such things, of the mood in America in the 1920's when we seemed to be at the pinnacle of our glory, and then of the anxiety and uncertainty in which we now live, having suffered two wars in the short space of the ten years that have just passed. Is it possible that in the causes of Solomon's failure we may find the key to our own doom and perhaps our resurrection?

Solomon's failure was really a gradual deterioration rather than the sudden collapse, late in life, which is pictured in *ch. 11.* The condensed nature of the story partially explains the impression of suddenness. The author, also, is obviously a great admirer of Solomon and can hardly bring himself to tell of the tragic end of the king's life. But the long-growing fissures in Solomon's greatness are to be clearly perceived through incidental remarks that are innocently made here and there throughout the story. They probably developed so slowly and imperceptibly that Solomon himself was unaware of his departure from his original ideals, which were analyzed in the previous lesson. But at least three defects can be noted as contributing to Solomon's demise.

Religious Instability

Solomon was fervently religious, but he was never clear as to who his god was. To be capable of strong and mystical devotion is one thing; to be certain of devotion to the one true God is another. Historians sometimes accuse Solomon of failing in every aspect in which David, his father, was successful: militarily, politically, socially, and religiously. This may be so. But, at least in the last respect, could anything better be expected of Solomon? The Biblical author blames the influence of foreign wives for the corruption of the king. (*Ch. 11: 1-8.*) Because he loved his pagan wives, we are told, Solomon also came to worship their pagan gods. The author himself notes that the very act of marrying non-Israelites was already a serious breach of the Hebrew faith. (*V. 2.*) And the example for such behavior goes right back to David himself. Moreover, it is likely that Solomon's mother, Bath-sheba, the former wife of Uriah the Hittite, was not an Israelite. And in all probability she pampered Solomon. David's harem was too big and his life too complex for the king to spend much time with his children. David had seemed to be willing for Adonijah to succeed him as king (*ch. 1: 6*), and it was only through the intercession of Bath-sheba and Nathan that his favor was turned toward Solomon (*vs. 11-27*).

What Bath-sheba's religion was we do not know. She may have worshiped the Baalim at the "high places" of Canaan. And although Solomon had been trained to worship Jehovah, the God of Israel, he at first worshiped him at the sanctuaries of the Canaanites, especially at Gibeon. Nor did the new Temple at Jerusalem immediately become the exclusive place of worship. Before the public, David had been adamant in his stand for a pure and undefiled worship of Jehovah, and this religion had been one of the important forces used by David in the unifying of the tribes of Israel into a nation. But the influence of David's example of foreign wives, and the influence of Bath-sheba, must have seriously undermined the clarity and strength of Solomon's religious vision. The source of religious instability for this future king—as for so many people in our day—was in the home.

In spite of the apparent sincerity of Solomon in his magnificent prayer to Jehovah at the dedication of the Temple, it is doubtful whether he ever knew Jehovah in the terms of Moses' first two Commandments. It is little wonder, though tragic to behold, that in his latter years the promising monarch could no longer distinguish between the holy and righteous spirit of Jehovah and such sensual, exotic, and frightful gods and goddesses as Ashtoreth of Sidon, Chemosh of Moab and, worst of all, Molech (Milcom) of Ammon, who demanded the sacrifice of infants in a fiery pit. (*Ch. 11 5-8.*) Persistent vigilance for the purity of faith is the price of religious strength. Any people (including Americans) who allow their religion to become muddied by mixing and confusing it with purely human ideas, aims, desires, and institutions soon find their religion to be blind and impotent. If our age lacks moral vigor and a sense of right and wrong—as various circumstances seem to indicate it does—it is because we are vague and uncertain in our religious beliefs. And this religious degeneration is the result of the pagan materialism and the success-ideal that dominated our national life during the early decades of this century—a twentieth century paganism very much akin to that of Solomon.

But granted that Solomon's overall failure can be traced to a religious failure, and that his religious degeneration can be attributed to a religious instability for which his home was partially to blame, what were the cooperating forces in his character and environment that upset the delicate balance of his religious loyalty to God?

Sensual Temptations

Solomon was reared in luxury. All the old tradition of nomadic simplicity and austerity was lost to him. In Solomon we find the beginning of the transformation of the Hebrew king from the humble hard-working servant of Jehovah and his people into the Oriental potentate, splendid in all his sensuous pomp and power. It is

idle to speculate that Israel might have been preserved from the disintegration that set in after Solomon if an earlier, hardier son of David had succeeded to the throne. Solomon was but a symbol and a product of the spirit abroad in his nation in his time. He is but an outstanding example of the inability of Israel to resist the seductive excitement of the fertility worship of the Canaanites and the glorifying of human power and wealth that was so much a part of the rich and gaudy Oriental court. The religious and moral strength and vision of the people of God simply were not able to comprehend the task of establishing a kingdom of justice and moral leadership among the nations.

Solomon was not satisfied with building the Temple as God's dwelling place. He also had to build an extensive and richly embellished palace for himself and another for his queen, the daughter of Pharaoh. He also rebuilt many of the cities and extended the walls of Jerusalem. Modern excavations of Solomon's buildings reveal them to have been on a grand scale that must have truly impressed the uncultured Hebrews. Nor was Solomon satisfied with "a land flowing with milk and honey." He made it flow with gold, silver, ivory, precious woods, strange animals, and every exotic treasure that the world had to offer. How the heart of Moses would have broken at the sight of this bitter and corrupted end of his hard-fought pilgrim's way! And it ought to be noted that his international commerce helped to lead Solomon to worship foreign gods. Every trade agreement and political treaty with other nations required the exchange of gods with them. And to satisfy his material and political ambitions, Solomon did not balk at the requirement. In fact, the true extent of Solomon's corruption as a result of his luxurious and sensual ways becomes most evident in his political behavior.

Political Degeneracy

Solomon became a tyrant. His demand for lavish and luxurious possessions dealt the death blow to any spiritual vision he might have had. Pleasure and rejoicing in beauty are not evil in themselves. They are gifts of God. But accumulating material wealth beyond our needs can hardly be accomplished except by exploiting other men, and the intemperate satisfaction of desire ends in the enslavement of the self to that desire. A slave to his passions, Solomon became a tyrant to his people.

The exclamation of the Queen of Sheba, "Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants" (*ch. 10: 8*), is misleading. In her specially guided tour of Solomon's kingdom, she certainly was made to bypass the slum dwellings of slaves and of poverty-stricken peasants. She probably did not see the gangs of enforced laborers, running perhaps as many as 150,000 during Solomon's twenty-year building program, and being drafted not only from the Canaanites but also from every tribe of Israel (*chs. 5: 13; 11: 28*). No one showed her the tax rolls that revealed the practice of plain extortion to support Solomon's extravagances. She may not have known what part of the national income was spent in maintaining the huge military establishment (*ch. 4: 20-28*), including a navy at Eziongeber (*ch. 9: 26-28*). Her words indeed would be ironical if she knew that, in spite of all, Solomon became so financially embarrassed that he had to sell twenty cities in the north to Hiram, king of Tyre (*vs. 10-14*)—cities of the holy heritage of the Promised Land, bought with the blood of selfless pioneers, now squandered away to satiate the lusts of a sensual king. Little wonder that upon the death of Solomon the enraged populace rejected Solomon's son as king and stoned to death the official in charge of the labor battalions.

The Scripture Lesson for September 28

Scripture: *I Kings 4: 20-34; 7: 1-8; 9: 10 to 11: 43*

The Printed Text: *I Kings 4: 20, 21; 11: 4-13*

The Golden Text: "A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."—*Luke 12: 15.*

(Revised Standard Version)

I Kings 4: 20 Judah and Israel were as many as the sand by the sea; they ate and drank and were happy. 21 Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt; they brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.

* * * * *

Ch. 11: 4 For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. 5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. 6 So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not wholly follow the Lord, as David his father had done. 7 Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Molech the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of Jerusalem. 8 And so he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

9 And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, 10 and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the Lord commanded. 11 Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, "Since this has been your mind and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant. 12 Yet for the sake of David your father I will not do it in your days, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. 13 However I will not tear away all the kingdom; but I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen."

The Scripture quotations are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyrighted by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, and are used by permission.

Questions for Discussion

1. What made Solomon the way he was? What about the influence of his heritage? his environment?

2. This is the last lesson of the quarter (and our last one on the Old Testament for several months). What progress had been made in Israel in the three hundred years between the conquest of Canaan and the end of Solomon's reign? Was there as much spiritual progress as you might have expected? If not, why not? Do the people seem much better off as Solomon passes from the scene than they were in Joshua's day?

3. As a nation Israel was not a success at the end of this period. How, then, do you account for its persistent survival and influence, even down to our own day?

The latter days of Solomon were as pathetic as they were tragic. That a man of such brilliant promise in his youth could come so low! Gone the dedicated regent of God! Gone the wise consultations with the elders and fathers of Israel! Gone the voice of the prophets! Gone the compassionate concern for the welfare of Jehovah's flock! Under Solomon's fateful touch Israel's wealth was sacrificed to sensuality, Israel's power was twisted into tyranny, and Israel's peace was lost in petty wars that started the dissolution of the kingdom. (*Ch. 11: 14-43.*)

Can any people become wealthy, powerful, and sophisticated without losing the simpler virtues of honesty, justice, kindness, and humility? That is the riddle posed by the reign of Solomon and confronted by our civilization today. And his failure suggests a solution for us: first, the recovery of religious stability; rooted and grounded in the home itself; secondly, the discipline of our passions under the rule of a Christian scale of values ("seek ye first the kingdom of God . . ."); and, finally, the resurgence of social and political concern as an expression of the prophetic criticism of all human institutions. If we mark well Solomon's decline, it may yet lead us to the way in which salvation lies for America in 1952.

A New Quarter—A New Year

In October the *Christian Faith and Life* curriculum begins the year on the theme "The Bible." After some introductory lessons that help us to understand what the Bible is and how to study it, we shall devote the rest of the quarter to studies in the book of Genesis.

During the rest of the year the course will study the history of Israel, the words of one prophet, and the fulfillment of the covenant in Jesus Christ. The whole year's work centers in the concept of God's covenant with his people.

The International Uniform lessons will be on The Gospel According to Matthew, October through March. In the April to June quarter these lessons will be on "Paul and Some of His Letters."

The person in your church school responsible for ordering the lesson material should be reminded that the deadline for placing the order is July 15.

Lesson 11—David, the Man of God

(Continued from page 69)

in the future. He would perform this either through the return of David, or by means of a mighty "son," who would deliver Israel, unite it again, and make it head over the nations. (*Jer. 30: 9, 21.*) For God had promised to David that he would establish the throne of his kingdom forever. (*II Sam. 7: 13, 14.*) Thus the name of David became the symbol of the ideal ruler of his line, whom God would send in due time to deliver them and to re-establish his kingdom, which would last forever.

Here a word of explanation about the nature of the kingship in Israel is necessary. The kings of the Old Testament were consecrated to their office by the ceremony of anointing with oil. These kings were often referred to simply as "Messiah," which means "Anointed one." In the Greek Old and New Testaments, the Hebrew word "Messiah" is translated as *Christos,* from which we have the word "Christ." Although the priests were also anointed, kings alone were called "the Lord's anointed." (*I Sam. 24: 6, 10; II Sam. 19: 21.*)

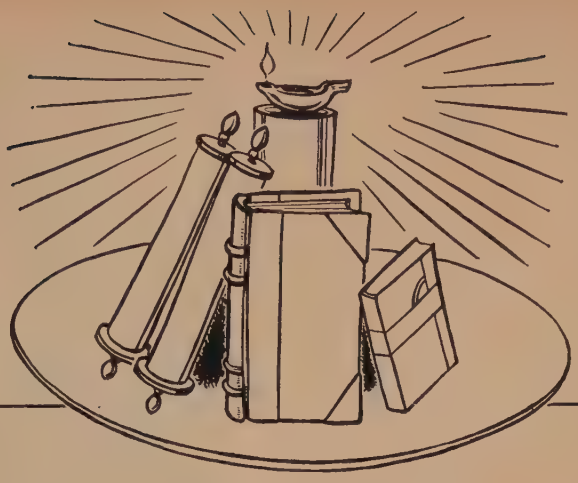
This hope that an ideal king, a Messiah or Christ, would come from the house of David was also nurtured by the prophets. Their predictions, however, increasingly de-emphasized the political leadership of the king and stressed his leadership in justice and righteousness. Note, for example, the familiar words in *Isa. 9: 6, 7:* "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: . . . Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever."

Then, by the time of the Exile, the prophet Ezekiel described this Davidic king, not as a mighty military conqueror, but as a shepherd. "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I, Jehovah, will be their God, and my servant David prince among them." (*Ezek. 34: 23, 24.*)

Side by side with the concept of the Messiah as the ideal king descending from the house of David, there came to be associated with the Messiah several other aspects: that of a priest (*Zech. 6: 12, 13*), of a prophet (*Isa. 61: 1-3*), and of the Servant of the Lord (*Isa. 42: 1-7; 49: 1-6; 50: 4-9; chs. 52: 13 to 53: 12*). All these aspects of the Messiah—royal, priestly, prophetic, and the Servant of the Lord—became fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is regarded as a descendant of David. (*Matt. 1: 1; Luke 1: 32; Rom. 1: 3; II Tim. 2: 8; Heb. 7: 14; Rev. 5: 5; 22: 16.*) The needy people recognized him as the "Son of David" (*Matt. 9: 27; 12: 23; 15: 22; 20: 30; 21: 9*). And when, on the eve of his ascension, his disciples inquired of Him, "Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (*Acts 1: 6*), they may have been thinking of the glorious kingdom of David which was vivid to the Hebrews as the time of God's greatest glory in their land.

BOOKS
for Christian Study



A STONE, A LEAF, A DOOR

Poems

by Thomas Wolfe

Selected and arranged in verse by John S. Barnes

(Charles Scribner's Sons. 1946. $2.75)

This study guide was prepared by James W. Hoffman.

ANYONE who is practiced in reading poetry will surely enjoy this little book of portions from the writings of Thomas Wolfe. And for many of those who have found poetry dull or difficult, this book may open the way into what is for many the richest kind of reading.

For most of the common obstacles to enjoying poetry—archaic language, long-ago-and-faraway settings, references to a culture few Americans are familiar with—are absent from this book. Thomas Wolfe was an American, of our own generation. He spoke our language—the language he learned in North Carolina and New York. He was far from being a "high-brow"; he was a careful and sincere artist, but was not "arty" in the sense of being affected or obscure. He was first of all a novelist, and his books—*The Web and the Rock; Look Homeward, Angel; Of Time and the River*, to mention a few—were best sellers. Last summer, thirteen years after Wolfe's death at the age of thirty-seven, a small unpublished book of his was discovered; it was big news in the world of reading. It seems likely that Thomas Wolfe will be remembered as long as there are Americans to read.

Religiously, Tom Wolfe was typical of millions of men and women of his generation. Although his family was Presbyterian, and as a boy he went to Sunday school, he lost touch with the church in manhood. He never specifically repudiated Christianity, and he was certainly not a convinced atheist. But, as is often the case with the "modern mind," he could not comfortably rely on a creed resting on authority or revelation. To make his faith substantial, he had to derive it from his own thought and experience. Much of the appeal of his novels lies in the search for faith that they describe and in what they tell us about Wolfe's ultimate convictions.

Modern Christians might do well to develop an understanding of people like Wolfe, who feel that they must start from scratch in building a religious faith. Most of them are potential Christians—Chad Walsh calls them "fellow-travelers of Christ"—and many of them are chary of the church only because of some misunderstanding about it that Christians ought to be prepared to clear up for them.

Study Thomas Wolfe, then, as an intelligent, observant man, certainly not unreligious, who searched for the meaning of life in life itself—the common life he saw around him—but did not avail himself of the help the Christian Church stood ready to give him. Needless to say, when we seek to understand him on these terms, we are not thereby condoning some of his personal habits, such as excessive drinking. He is not presented as an example but as a person who has something important to say to Christians in our day.

MR. HOFFMAN is an associate editor of *Presbyterian Life*.

I. Death and His Brother

Read poems "O Lost," page 5; "Artemidorus, Farewell!" page 8; and "A Stone, A Leaf, A Door," page 1, in this order.

When Tom Wolfe was eighteen, his brother Ben died. Tom pondered the problem of death and immortality the rest of his life, never wholly able to believe that death extinguished personal existence, but not sure what happened, as the poem "O Lost" shows. He was almost obsessed with the sad reflection that although men must die, the earth and its seasons go on. Is the total effect of "O Lost" on the optimistic or pessimistic side of the problem of immortality?

Someone has called poetry the art of naming things. In this work a poet is like Adam in Eden when he named the animals God had created. A poet comes across a scene, a person, an emotion or a sentiment that strikes him in a new way, and the word, phrase, or line he writes in his "name" for it. For example, the first stanza of "Artemidorus, Farewell!" might be considered Wolfe's name for the feeling he has about his brother's death—a feeling that no matter what one thinks about life and death, it is impossible to believe that a person one has loved no longer exists. Although many other people have had similar intuitions, they can hardly be universal, for many who have lost loved ones in death still do not believe in immortality. Yet such personal intuitions are part of the material from which a man

thinking about religion must construct his faith. What is the teaching of the Bible and the Church about personal immortality? Does it reinforce or run counter to Wolfe's ideas on the subject?

Wolfe speaks of ". . . the music of the lost world, . . . the great forgotten language." He seems to feel that we dimly and occasionally "remember" another life while living this one. Have you ever had a similar experience? Is Wolfe describing the same thing that William Wordsworth has in mind in his poem "Intimations of Immortality" when he writes,

> "Our birth is but a sleep and
> a forgetting"?

(See the entire Wordsworth poem; it is in most anthologies.) What do you think of this idea?

"A Stone, A Leaf, A Door" expresses a very deep loneliness which Wolfe never overcame. Do you agree with his implication that we can never really know or get close to another human being? Was this a personal limitation of Wolfe's, or are all of us basically alone in this life? What can Christianity say on this subject?

Tom Wolfe was extremely shy and awkward socially; intimacy with anyone came very hard to him. He came to regard himself an authority on loneliness, and he once wrote a lengthy essay about it. Yet at the typewriter he revealed a warm and generous heart—his knowledge of the look, speech, thoughts, and feelings of his fellow men was uncanny; his pity for the tragedies of others sometimes overwhelmed him as it overwhelms the reader of his book.

Do we err by assuming that a person who is not easily cordial and lives pretty much to himself is selfish or snobbish? It might be true, of course, but it is hazardous to judge. A seemingly aloof exterior may hide a richly human heart. Have you ever known a person like that?

II. Man and America

Read poems "This Is Man," page 47, and "Burning in the Night," page 158.

In the poem "This Is Man," Wolfe sketches his impression of man's life through various ages. Does he find any age span especially attractive? Is his estimate of human nature fairly true to experience? (See pp. 50-54.) The last part of the poem might be subtitled "On the Other Hand." To what does Wolfe attribute man's astonishing achievements? Would you agree that men, by and large, love life? Can exception be taken to Wolfe's view that "puny man made love. . . . At his best, he *is* love"? In the last stanza, does Wolfe seem to believe in the immortality of the person himself, or in immortality of the influence of a person's deeds during his lifetime? Which kind of immortality does the Christian believe in?

THOMAS WOLFE, interpreter of American life.

"Burning in the Night" is an expression of Wolfe's love for America. During a period in which it was fashionable for American writers to flee to Paris and vie with one another in complaining about America's materialism, isolationism, Babbittry, and so on, Thomas Wolfe loved his country and wrote about it with the deepest respect. He was no spread-eagle jingoist—he was painfully aware of this country's failings during the hectic 1920's and the discouraging 1930's. But he loved the United States as a man loves a woman: in spite of, perhaps including, her shortcomings. Wolfe's descriptions of American countryside and cities and "manswarms" would make homesick reading for any American abroad—the very look, sound, and savor of America are in his words.

This love for America is seen in a unique way in his last book, *A Western Journal,* which consists of notes he made in a thirteen-day trip through the national parks of Western United States. He planned to write from these notes a work "that I hope may suc-

ceed in recording a whole hemisphere of life and of America," an America that moved him with "the pity, terror, strangeness, and magnificence of it all." [1] His death nine weeks later wrote an end to that hope.

III. God and His Father

Read poems "Father, I Know That You Live," page 22; "Gant's Dream," page 108; "Pity," page 30; and "Toward Which," page 166.

Many times in Tom Wolfe's books traces occur of the unsatisfactory relationship he had with his father. Often references to his father have the double meaning of "father" and "God"—and it is interesting to note that both the Bible and modern psychoanalysis recognize (though in very different ways) a similarity between the deity and an earthly father. It is, therefore, easy to be confused as to which meaning the word might have. For example, in the poem "Father, I Know That You Live," Wolfe definitely refers to God, not his earthly father. Find lines that confirm this explanation.

Gant (in "Gant's Dream") is a fictional character of Wolfe's through whom the novelist revealed many of his own thoughts and experiences. This poem is vague and incoherent, like a real dream, but it has a point, and a psychoanalyst would probably dissect it with glee. In his journey Gant takes the wrong turn and is left, lost and alone. Was his mistake pure accident, or had it an element of weakness or guilt?

In the next poem, "Pity," do you agree that pity is a "learned" emotion? Are we sympathetic with suffering in proportion as we ourselves have suffered? Wolfe saw the tragic nature of human life clearly—"For love, that must grow old and be forever dying." Beauty that fades and strength that wanes must be experienced by every one of us. In our day there is a widespread tendency to avert our eyes from the pathos of life—death is coming, we know; but many feel that it is morbid to give any thought to the matter. Is this attitude good or bad?

The last poem in the book, "Toward Which," may come as a surprise—it might almost have been written by an orthodox Christian. Summarize Wolfe's lines about the afterlife, and see how his conception conforms to Christian doctrine.

It might be useful to speculate on why Wolfe, having come so far toward Christianity, did not reunite with the church, as some people of his calling and caliber are doing today. Would he have done so had he lived into the 1940's? Did he possibly have unpalatable childhood memories of unintelligent or unwise religious teaching in the church? Recalling the years through which Wolfe lived, what other considerations might have kept him out of the church, which has always offered what Wolfe so plainly wanted?

It would be difficult to determine, from these poems, whether or not Wolfe regarded himself as a Christian. But in an essay, "God's Lonely Man," he wrote that he had read the Gospels many times and was well aware that Christ's way of life was better than his own—so much better, in fact, that he could not aspire to it. So he left the Christian life for people of higher moral quality than himself. But this realistic estimate of himself reveals a basic misunderstanding of Christian doctrine that is rather widespread among "good pagans" like Wolfe. How would you straighten out a non-Christian on this point? Could you have convinced Wolfe that he is the very sort who ought to become a Christian?

[1] From *A Western Journal*, by Thomas Wolfe. Used by permission.

BARABBAS

A Novel

by Pär Lagerkvist

Translated from the Swedish by Alan Blair

(Random House. 1951. $2.75)

This study guide is prepared by George L. Hunt.

When Pär Lagerkvist was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1951, his citation read: "For the artistic power and deep-rooted independence he demonstrates in his writings in seeking an answer to the eternal questions of humanity." *Barabbas*, his novel about the acquitted thief whom Jesus replaced on the cross, justifies this description, for its style is sparse and sharp and its theme as old as the problem of Cain—the tragedy of the man who cannot believe. It is recommended as a book for study by Christians because it leads us to examine the nature and source of our own belief and also makes us consider with compassion the plight of those among whom we live who cannot believe. One reviewer, in setting forth the theme of this book, describes Barabbas as "a selfish, restless, loveless man who stands for all of us who linger on the periphery of Christianity, wondering how it could be that one man—and a poor figure of a man at that—could die for another." [2]

The emotional impact of the book is so intense that a person does not want to dissect it in the way most books are broken down for this course. The reader should first read the book through for itself and pay no attention to the notes on it that follow in this article. Then, however, if you want to think about what you have read—as you undoubtedly will—what follows will guide your thinking.

The Crossed-out Name

The symbol of Barabbas' unbelief is the crossed-out name of Jesus Christ on his slave disk. Note how relentlessly the author hammers home this unbelief: the name burns against the slave's chest, and the governor crosses it out when Barabbas says softly, "I have no god" (p. 143). His terrible aloneness "in heaven and on earth" is represented by "his slave's disk with God's crossed-out name." (See pp. 164, 165.)

Why could he not believe? What stands in the way of his having the kind of faith that the girl with the harelip, that Sahak, that Peter had? Was it skepticism? (See pp. 5, 45-48, and 59.) Yet was it not something more than a stubborn reasonableness? How much did his ignorance of love have to do with it? He was a completely unloving and unloved person; the doctrine "Love one another" was an enigma to him. Is this not the key to his unbelief? Barabbas knew only hatred; finally, at the end, Christ was comprehensible to him only when he thought the Lord had returned to destroy by fire the lives and cities of

[2] From "Pär Lagerkvist: Dramatist of the Soul," by Richard B. Vowles. *Saturday Review of Literature*, Dec. 1, 1951.

(Continued on page 79)

Books in Review

Books and supplies listed here and elsewhere in this magazine are carefully checked for their availability and price, but unfortunately there is a considerable time between original listing and publication. For this reason prices are subject to change.

A Classical Scholar Studies the Bible

Spokesmen for God, by Edith Hamilton. (W. W. Norton & Co., Inc. 259 pages. $3.00.)

Witness to the Truth, by Edith Hamilton. (W. W. Norton & Co., Inc. 230 pages. $3.00.)

Edith Hamilton, a serious student of Latin and Greek literature, received her M.A. degree from Bryn Mawr in 1894. Furthering her studies at Leipzig and Munich, she fell under the influence of German classicism, returned to America, and organized a Bryn Mawr School at Baltimore. Her first book was *The Greek Way,* her second *The Roman Way,* each presenting the genuine pleasure she had known while learning of the Greek and Roman eras.

In 1936 Edith Hamilton won respect for her fine presentation of the unique power and genius of *The Prophets of Israel.* In 1949 *Spokesmen for God* enlarged her treatment to significant parts of the Old Testament. In the course of the study the author considers the variety and variance of ideas as set forth by the sacred writers. Hosea, the First Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Second Isaiah, the prophets of Israel are given chapter-long treatment.

The style of the author is clear, well phrased, and stimulating. It sponsors further and deeper insight into the Old Testament. The progressive clarification of the concept of God's nature and his method of working are very well presented. The problem of suffering and God's relationship to it is admirably handled. The reader may not always agree with the author, especially if committed to a conservative viewpoint, but the time spent with this study will be amply rewarding. It will stimulate a rethinking and a restudy of the Old Testament. This presentation is not a mere mold for set thinking but a flame to devour "wood, hay, stubble." The last two chapters alone, one on the qualifications and motivations of the prophets, the other on the lasting truths they set forth (in somewhat of a summary to the book), warrant reading and owning this excellent work.

Witness to the Truth deals with the New Testament. Here the Greek and Latin classical training of the author shines through the whole treatment. What is needed more than anything else, says this writer, is to strip all the appearances and false additions aside, rediscover the essential truth Christ revealed, and witness to it in life. Here truth is not a monopoly of the Scriptures. In Miss Hamilton's judgment there have been rays of light that gave light, even though short of the full spectrum of Christ. Socrates was one such who presented much of the truth Christ fully revealed.

Here is a stimulating study. Her evaluation of the Gospels and of Paul is not the usual treatment. Her chapter, "The Failure of the Church," is trenchant in the treatment; the pen of the author at times becomes a scalpel. Some may think her operation destroys the patient. Others will say it is skillfully done. But all honest Christians, living in a time such as ours, will say the operation is needed.—*Earl F. Fowler.*

A Humanist Faith

Defeat Triumphant, by Lewis Maclachlan. (Henry Regnery Company. 84 pages. $2.00.)

This publication is listed as number IX of The Humanist Library. The author's own summary of his argument is:

"(1) That the human race is in dire peril; (2) that a way to avert that peril has been announced in the Christian gospel; (3) that this way, demonstrated in the life and death of Jesus Christ, is the way of the Cross; (4) that the redemptive power of the Cross is forgiveness (an act in which three steps were observed, exposure of evil, defenselessness, forgiveness)."

This author has something significant to say and he says it well. Much of the material is not new; Ch. VII on "forgiveness" is perhaps the best and many would find it helpful.

It is difficult, however, to see how a book on the victory of Christ could be written without mentioning the resurrection and return of Christ; however, that is what Mr. Maclachlan has done. It is a humanistic rather than a Christian apologia for the Christian way.—*Russell L. Jaberg.*

Get Into Politics

The Christian in Politics, by Jerry Voorhis. (Association Press. 136 pages. $1.75.)

After ten years in Congress, with experience of victory and defeat at the polls, and measured success and failure in the House, the author writes realistically of the need and opportunity for men and women with Christian convictions and character to assume their responsibilities in politics at all levels of our national and international life.

He believes "there is an all-embracing plan and purpose in the mind of God. . . . Obedience to it gives an inward strength and spiritual power which no evil can destroy, or, in the long run, deny. . . . The preservation and the extension of democratic political institutions is a Christian political issue because it involves an opportunity to express our

Christian convictions as free men and women."

It is not a particularly rosy-tinted picture of political life that Mr. Voorhis paints. But its appeal will be strong to men and women who respond to the challenge of tasks that are difficult because they are significant and constructive and necessary. Such people will welcome the demand for "all their reserves of endurance and toil and more."

The influence of Christian character in public affairs, the embodiment of Christian ideals in thinking and conduct, is emphasized. One is reminded of a comment about Gladstone, the great English Liberal prime minister: "It is a great thing to be able to trust in one man's integrity."

That Jerry Voorhis is such a man was brought home to me by a former secretary of his, an old colleague of mine, who was utterly devoted to him and his work. The book checks with my friend's statements.

And finally, if the one world toward which we look is to be built on a Christian interpretation of the moral law, and not on Stalin's or Mohammed's or some other's, then Christian men and women must enlist in the political forces that are building the world society.—*Wilbert B. Smith.*

A Book for Remembrance

Salvation, by Sholem Asch. Translated by Willa and Edwin Muir. (G. P. Putnam's Sons. Revised edition, 1951. 343 pages. $3.50.)

When Hitler struck at the great Jewish population of Poland, Jews all over the world went into mourning. Sholem Asch, who is a Polish Jew, offers this book as a memorial to those thousands dead. But it is more than that.

It is a classic written by a master; through sympathetic translators the flavor of the original is preserved, even enhanced. The Jew is an Oriental in his emotional reaction toward life and toward his God. His religion to him is exacting but rich and beautiful.

Yechiel, the central character in *Salvation,* is a little Brother Lawrence who comes to know his God as a close and dear friend. From Yechiel's first day in school, when his mother put a drop of honey on his tongue so learning would be sweet; throughout his life, filled with hardship, sorrow, and bitter poverty, he loved and served his great and good Friend.

It should be read by every Jew, for it restores the dignity of serving the one, the true God. It should also be read by all Christians, for it helps us not only to understand the Orthodox Jew but to trace our beginnings as the heirs of this great faith.

Sholem Asch knows his people, and we see their faults as we see their virtues. *Salvation,* or "The Psalm Jew," as it was originally called, stands as an everlasting light to the memory of a suffering, persecuted people, but more than that—read with an understanding heart, it shows the way to know God and serve him in truth and in oneness of heart.—*Elsie Smith Costello.*

Toward Self-Examination

Saint Francis of Assisi, by John R. H. Moorman. (SCM Press Ltd., London. 127 pages. About $1.50.)

This little book presents a vivid portrayal of the great saint and the order that grew out of his exemplary life. For he didn't intend to found an order; it just grew. In these pages we see why and how. This is a factual biography, well documented and illustrated, interesting and readable. You feel, after laying it down, that you have traveled with Francis all through his life, as he felt his sense of call through a series of "divine visitations"; as he committed his life to an imitation of Christ, taking literally everything that Christ said; as he suffered with Christ, deeply motivated by a fellow feeling in his passion; as he set forth and exemplified the four foundation stones of the "Franciscan Way"—Humility, Simplicity, Poverty, and Prayer. One cannot read this book without being moved to a period of self-examination in the light of the Christ and a Christ-dominated saint.—*David I. Rees.*

(See page 95 also.)

Barabbas

(Continued from page 77)

the hated Romans. See these references to the power of hate in his life: pp. 86, 99, 147, and 156. Barabbas' total inability to comprehend love is what makes Christ a stranger to him. Pages 56, 57 are an important examination of the acquitted man's mind. (See also pp. 91, 92.)

It is not enough for us, however, to put Barabbas' unbelief down to hatred and his ignorance of love. We cannot answer the problem or the tragedy so neatly. Lagerkvist does not answer it—he leaves us asking: "But *why? Why* can't Barabbas comprehend love?" Others, as ill-treated in life as he, believe in the power of love. Why not Barabbas, who wanted so desperately to believe? The question is unanswered.

It is significant, however, that Lagerkvist shows how Barabbas is drawn again and again to Christ and Christians. This desire to believe is always the first step in the awakening of faith. Perhaps Lagerkvist would not say this, but Barabbas' attraction to Christianity is a stirring born of God, God himself calling out to this man's soul. But why does he not respond? The question remains to haunt us, even as the words at the end of the book trouble us in their ambiguity.

The Christians in the Story

In your reflection on the book you might review the Christians whom Barabbas knew. There are the rank and file, of course, those who will have nothing to do with the man when they find out who he is. (See pp. 38, 54, 66, 67, 172-174.) There is also Lazarus, a shadowy figure. But think particularly about Peter, and the fictional believer Sahak.

This is surely one of the more believable interpretations of Peter in fiction. First he appears the day after the crucifixion (pp. 27-38), trying to comprehend the reason for Jesus' death but being shaken to his soul by the recollection that he denied him. Then Barabbas and Peter meet in the Roman prison. (Pp. 174-179.) What is the change that has come over him? What accounts for it? Ponder long on the magnificent and truly Christian words with which Peter commends Barabbas to the Christians. (P. 177.) Does the fact that Peter once denied his Lord make him capable of more compassion for Barabbas?

Sahak is brought into the story to provide Barabbas with another chance to believe and yet to show how true faith relentlessly evades the slave. Is the way Barabbas dupes Sahak with his account of the resurrection pitiable, or is Lagerkvist saying that just because one man cannot receive faith from the event is no reason to deny the possibility to someone else?

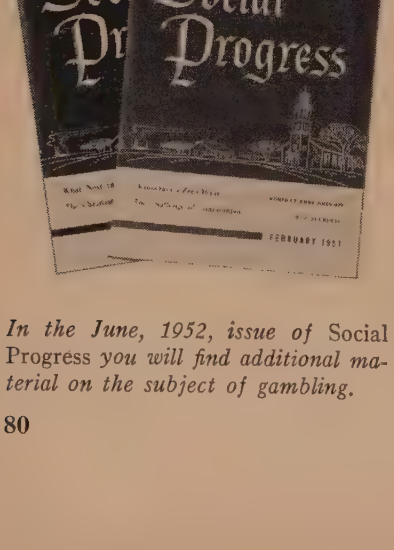
Lagerkvist's key word for Christians like Sahak and Peter is "ingenuous." Do you think it is an apt adjective?

Gambling and Its Complications

By Frederick Walker

WHILE the editor of a great metropolitan newspaper sat in his office writing editorials against the numbers racket, outside his door in the city room and in the advertising and circulation departments three numbers pools were being operated by his own employees. These newspapermen played the game every day. Those who won were elated. Those who lost felt that their turn would come another day. The amounts invested were so small that nobody felt he was losing very much if his number did not come up. Still the daily investment amounted to a sizable sum at the end of the year. Losses over a period of time led to quarrels between husbands and wives. The power of the press was clearly stopped here before it began.

The gambling habits of Americans are deeply ingrained and widespread. The man who gambles all night and writes a check to cover his losses, only to spend an unhappy morning trying to make good his overdraft at the bank, is a too common type. Or the chap who stops in at the club or taproom on pay day for a little game and goes home broke is tragically common too. Productive wages are lost, and families go without necessities because of the gambling habit of millions.



In the June, 1952, issue of Social Progress *you will find additional material on the subject of gambling.*

In the information that follows, we shall consider the form of gambling, its effects on the community, some of the findings of the Kefauver Committee, the fixed income of the gambling operator, and some questions about gambling and maturity.

The Forms of Gambling

The forms of gambling are to be seen everywhere: slot machines, punch boards, pari-mutuel machines, bingo, numbers pools. The race tracks of the country are highly profitable, and the taxes that are derived from them are big items in the budgets of certain states.

Gambling can take place at the Stock Exchange in Wall Street or in the nearest drugstore with its slot machine. Gambling has invaded factories and offices. According to one estimate, as much as a billion dollars a year on sweepstakes tickets alone comes directly from the pay envelopes of workers. The total gambling bill of Americans is somewhere between $6,800,000,000 (the minimum guess) and $21,500,000,000 (the maximum).

Virgil W. Peterson attributes to gambling and to extravagant living standards most of the dishonesty encountered by businesses among their employees. Employers cite gambling as a chief influence causing thefts. Some say that as high as 75 per cent of all stealing in business firms is owing to the requirements for money placed upon the employee by gambling.

The temptation to gamble is as compulsive in man as the desire to drink and other vices, but its effect on the individual and his family is not so well known. We read and hear about Monte Carlo and its roulette wheels, where both the rich and the desperate of the world often play for high stakes and virtually always lose—much to the profit of the owners of the Monte Carlo Casino and the Prince of Monaco. The ruler of the tiny principality in which Monte Carlo is located is subsidized by the owners of the Casino. The suicide record at Monte Carlo is notorious. Death is often the answer to the feverish gambler following the roulette wheels.

From the charwoman placing her daily dime in the numbers racket to the all-night poker sessions where nervous, money-seeking men play for high stakes, gambling runs through our everyday life. Basically, gambling is the result of an infantile outlook on the part of the gambler. To gamble means to try to get something for nothing, and maturity teaches us that this is an impossible wish. No one ever gains much value for nothing. The inveterate gambler is as much a neurotic problem as the alcoholic. He wastes his substance and ruins his family just as the heavy drinker does as a result of his binges.

The Youngsters of Las Vegas

Gambling's intensity differs geographically and industrially across the nation. Nevada, for instance, is a "wide-open" state whose arrangements in Reno and in Las Vegas is often lauded as ideal. Gambling there is licensed, and the license fees help to pay government expenses. All that glitters, however, is not gold. "Albert Q. Maisel, writing in the October 1950, *Woman's Home Companion* about the situation in Las Vegas, is less rosy. He agrees that gaming licenses are a very important part of city revenue. But he points out that this is not 'pure velvet.' Las Vegas has 60 policemen—three per thousand where ordinarily 20 would be enough for a city of its size. 'Gunmen, stickup artists, safe crackers, and confidence

Big-time gambler, Frank Costello, appears before the Kefauver Committee in New York.

men flock to Las Vegas whenever their own home towns get too hot for them. . . . In addition to such birds of passage, the town with its surrounding area houses a substantial number of ex-convicts. Many are gambling-house operators. . . .'

"Many gambling houses are just beyond the city limits where all their expenses, including the gaming licenses, are lower, which makes higher city taxes impractical. 'Strapped between growing needs for civic improvements and the danger of driving the gamblers out of town, Las Vegas is chronically on the edge of bankruptcy.' 'Gambling costs the city administration just about as much, in special services, as it pays in special taxes,' he believes. In spite of conspicuous contributions to some charities, social agencies find it difficult to secure their budgets.

"The big gambling houses in the tourist section probably do not draw local residents to any great extent. But Mr. Maisel found that 'in drugstores and other retail establishments seldom patronized by tourists . . . the familiar slot machines' were 'merrily tossing up bars, bells, oranges, and lemons.' And 'nothing' can keep children out of 'drugstores and similar shops where the slot machines are a most prominent part of the equipment. To the youngsters of Las Vegas, gambling looms as a natural and expected part of life.' "[1]

When the Kefauver Investigating Committee visited Nevada, one of its purposes was to see whether "it would be a deterrent to organized crime to legalize gambling on a nation-wide basis."[2] After hearings in Las Vegas, the committee concluded, "As a case history of legalized gambling, Nevada speaks eloquently in the negative."

In his book, *Crime in America,* Senator Kefauver writes: "Both morally and financially, legalized gambling in Nevada is a failure. It is true that revenue derived from state and local levies on the gambling dives is welcome. . . . However, the amount the state receives is only a pitiful fraction of the millions of dollars that the gamblers themselves draw from the pockets of the public." He then points out the expense of police protection in Nevada and also the kind of people who are attracted to the state by its wide-open policy: "Nevada gambling centers have become headquarters for some of the nation's worst mobsters." Then Senator Kefauver comments: "America will be in a bad way if we ever have to resort to taxing crime and immorality for the purpose of raising revenue to operate our institutions."

[1] From "Gambling in America," in *Information Service,* Dec. 2, 1950. National Council of Churches.

[2] These and the quotations in the next paragraph are from *Crime in America,* by Estes Kefauver. Doubleday & Co. Used by permission.

Kefauver Committee Discoveries

The Kefauver Investigating Committee brought out for us the great importance and far-reaching influence of gambling in the United States. The Senatorial investigation has highlighted the tremendous powers held by the overlords of the gambling world, and their influence on persons holding high political office. The television programs that showed the activities of the Kefauver Committee questioning the overlords of vice and crime thrilled all of America, but what was not shown was the effect of gambling on the average American. The public responded to the sight of Frank Costello and his ilk on a hot spot; but it did not see, and therefore respond, to the individuals who make the Frank Costellos possible. Gambling, like everything else in the long run, remains a matter of the individual conscience. And that is where Christianity enters the picture; for the Christian must search for the truth about gambling as well as other powerful influences in the world.

The Kefauver Committee showed clearly that gambling is a highly organized business on an interstate plan. Many of its leaders are men with criminal records. It soon was seen that wherever gambling had succeeded on a large scale, police and politicians had co-operated with the criminals.

However, few missed the point that the main factor that made all this possible was the individual bettor. America's "tradition of lawbreaking" is credited by Virgil W. Peterson, who is operating director of the Chicago Crime Commission, as an influential cause of the scandal.

No Gamble for the Operator

The professional gambler or operator of some gaming device doesn't have to do much gambling. For him the operation is fixed to pay off a big profit. Consider these facts:[1]

. . . It is said that the numbers or policy racket pays off 46 per cent to 64 per cent of all the money bet to the operator.

. . . Baseball pools pay off 50 per cent to 80 per cent to the pool operator.

. . . In football pools, the take for the operator is from 37.5 per cent to 80 per cent.

. . . Sweepstakes tickets sold in the United States are usually counterfeit, according to Ernest E. Blanche, chief

statistician of the Logistics Division, General Staff, U. S. Army.

. . . Bingo pays 50 per cent to 80 per cent to the operator.

. . . Punchboards guarantee 50 per cent to 70 per cent to the owner.

. . . Slot machines are fixed in favor of the "house" to pay 40 per cent to 80 per cent.

The operator of a gambling business takes very few chances. He makes sure that he will get his return, regardless of the losses inflicted upon the gullible bettor. One bookmaker was reported in the New York *Herald Tribune* to be making a "clear profit" of $2,000 to $3,000 weekly. A Brooklyn betting syndicate was discovered by the Grand Jury to be clearing enough money annually to provide for an account of more than a million dollars with which to bribe police and other officials.

The bettor may suppose that if he places his money with some friend or fellow employee where he works that he cannot be supporting the criminals. But he is hoodwinked by the appearance of the betting arrangement. *Business Week* reported that one in every 250 employees of industry is also employed by a gambling syndicate. Plant gambling is highly organized by the gangster, and costly pay-offs are made for the protection of foremen, shop stewards, and some supervisors.

Even the charity lottery, conducted ostensibly for the benefit of a hospital or welfare group, is often a façade to cover the illegal work of racketeers, according to Virgil W. Peterson.

One of the most obvious facts about gambling is that the bettor stands an overwhelming chance to lose. The operators, who know a sure thing when they see it, don't gamble on this chance. They fix it.

A Question of Maturity

The real Christian, to live up to his faith and conscience, must be sincere and therefore cannot accept gambling as anything but a vice, basically infantile. In not accepting gambling but spurning it, our children will be led to a mature attitude about life. It is important that children learn in Christian homes the weakness of the immoral desire to get something for nothing.

A small businessman made $1,500 in a few weeks playing the horses. Rejoicing in his good fortune, he spent the money on his home, buying new equipment and other things. Believing he was in a winning streak, he continued playing the horses, only to lose the $1,500, which he no longer possessed. To make good his losses, he strained his credit to the limit, and today says: "I will never play the horses again. I have certainly learned my lesson."

Another man won $3,800 in one afternoon at the race tracks on a Thursday. Monday morning he was borrowing money for breakfast. Both of these men were fathers of small children—young men almost ruined in a few days. Only by facing the problem maturely did they escape. Had they continued, they would have lost their businesses and plunged their families into poverty. Yet how many there are who do continue until final ruin is the answer! How many more by their own actions influence others to stumble into the pitfalls of gambling!

The vast sums of money won and lost by gambling can come from but one source, and that is productive work. Every dollar gambled away was once earned by someone through work. In the end, only the professionals profit. To them come the fortunes. The losers are the everyday folks who squander their earnings and deprive themselves and their families. The mature person knows this and therefore does not gamble.

We can get estimates on the amounts of money spent in gambling and its profit. What we cannot know are the quarrels and the emotional strain between husbands and wives over the problem of gambling. No one knows how many children have been marred and hurt as a result of losses and bitterness. But we do know that these problems exist everywhere because of gambling. It is sometimes suggested that the psychological causes of the gambling urge are so great that, like alcoholism, they ought to be studied by experts who can suggest a "cure." Adult daily existence, boredom, family problems, personal defeat—these have been known to drive those without spiritual strength to excessive gambling.

Public morals, family life, and private conscience are affected by gambling. Easy come, easy go. The sudden winner of great wealth in a lottery usually spends his gains quickly or returns to gamble it away. The cost of gambling is more than most people can afford to pay, and its toll is too great for the average man trying to keep his family.

Your Program on Gambling

An open forum on the subject of gambling would make an excellent program, but not if the topic is kept on a national and impersonal level. Make certain that provisions are made to get the local examples of gambling into the presentation. A judge, an attorney, or a law-enforcement officer in whom the group has confidence may be invited to participate.

A report on the Kefauver Committee findings of last year will spice the program. Many newspapers and magazines carried these day-to-day hearings. Look in the *Readers' Guide* at the nearest library for sources of information.

The June, 1952, issue of *Social Progress* has additional facts about gambling and its national complications. Single copies cost 15 cents and can be secured from 830 Witherspoon Building, Philadelphia 7, Pa.

Discuss questions that are suggested by this article. Is it possible to accept any, even the least harmful forms of gambling, without letting in the whole pernicious system? Is the habitual gambler a psychological problem, as is the alcoholic? Do you think it is true to say that morals cannot be legislated? "If I gamble, it's my own business," is a frequently repeated untruth. Who else is involved besides the gambler? How are individual citizens affected in a wide-open town like Las Vegas? What can the aroused Christian do about gambling in his community, his factory, or his family?

The Christian Churches have landed some telling blows on local gambling. They go to work on the problem; they do have influence. Discuss what your church could do in your community.

The *Annals of the American Academy* for May, 1950, presented a study of American gambling. Several chapters of this study can be read and reported as short book reviews at the forum. Such features should be strictly timed, and the time limits should be enforced. The chairman must be well read on the subject himself if he is to direct discussion of the most important facets of the problem in the meeting.

After 176 years an old document still has something to say—

The Declaration of Independence—1776 Speaks to 1952

By Ernest Shelton Forest

On July fourth, one hundred and seventy-six years ago, a group of men bravely took action to correct intolerable conditions that were contrary to their fundamental beliefs. Exercising tremendous courage, the elected representatives of the people of thirteen separate and small colonies united to sign the Declaration of Independence and to set forth those principles which are still the basis of just and fair government.

It has become customary for us, on July 4, to honor these men and to reaffirm our belief in these ideas with flag displays, parades, and patriotic celebrations. So we try to rekindle our faith in the principles of government stated in that famous document:

> **"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."**

There were many, even in the colonies, who considered these men and the people who supported them revolutionaries. Perhaps they were. A *revolutionary* believes in his principles so strongly that when they are violated he is impelled to take action. It is misleading simply to say that it was the laws of the English Parliament (such as the Stamp Act or the tax on tea), or the acts of the king (such as the kidnapping of American sailors), which impelled these men to unified action. These offensive acts themselves were not enough to make men declare the thirteen colonies independent. It was the violation of their principles—as stated in the above quotation from the Declaration—that caused them to reaffirm these beliefs and take the necessary action.

Historical conditions change, but principles remain. And there are conditions in today's world that challenge us to stand up for those principles set forth by our revolutionary forefathers and in which we still believe.

The Charges, Then and Now

In the Declaration of Independence there are eighteen charges made against the King of England. All these charges are specific violations of the basic principles stated in the second paragraph of the Declaration, quoted in this article. Let us consider a few of these violations in relation to conditions in the United States today.

In the following selected quotations from the Declaration of Independence, remember that the "He" referred to was the then *King of England*, who, as a monarch, *represented the Government*. In the United States, *the people are the Government*, and, in considering these charges in relation to present-day conditions, we are the ones charged. We are the ones who have perhaps failed to take the action necessary to stand up for our principles and to revolt against those conditions which belie our beliefs.

"He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good."

Have there been recent occasions when we, the people, have not given our assent through active support and election of representatives to laws "the most wholesome and necessary for the public good"? What is our attitude on certain controversial laws that our legislatures enact? Do we give them the serious thought necessary? Or do we merely act as we were told to by others? Are we guilty of saying that it's "good" or "bad" because someone told us it was one or the other? Or do we consider it from the viewpoint of our fundamental Christian principles? Would there be more unified legislative action if we actively and persistently promoted those laws which are in accordance with Christianity?

"He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their Public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures."

Reinterpreting these quaint words in today's terms, we are charged for making it so difficult for a large group of our citizens that they are denied the rights guaranteed them in the Constitution.

In many cases, in the North and in the South, Negroes are denied by legalistic detours the responsibilities and privileges of those principles set forth in the Declaration of Independence. We do the same against Indians, Mexicans, and Orientals. As Christians, can we justify this denial of the spirit and intent of the law? Have we taken sufficient action to see that all citizens have the rights to which they are entitled?

"He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our People, and eat out their substance."

If we accept the recommendations of the Hoover Commission, the truth of this charge is easily seen. We have permitted the establishment of many bureaucratic offices in our Government. Do we know which ones are necessary and which ones are "happy hunting grounds" for political appointees? Have we demanded the abolishment of those whose function is unnecessary or ordered the investigation of those whose operations appear faulty? Recent Government reorganization, prompted by the Hoover Commission Report, suggests that we have done something in this field. Has enough been done? Are we satisfied that the recommendations of the Hoover Commission are correct? If so, have we actively supported these changes?

"He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power."

In this time of challenge from a way of life that is contrary to both our Christian and governmental principles, our national defense program is of primary importance. Communist leaders have made very clear in public statements that their aim is world Communism, under which there is no place for Christianity. Americans feel they must be ready to defend their principles with a strong Army, Navy, and Air Force. Yet we must exercise continual vigilance so that these same Armed Forces remain our servants. We must be careful not to trade away, even in times of great danger, our civil control over military power.

"He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their acts of pretended legislation: . . .

"For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury."

Do we ever try our fellow men and neighbors without the benefit of jury? Is there danger that our bridge club gossip or our businessmen's luncheon talk tries people without benefit of jury? How far does a rumor go with us? Do we ascertain the facts? Or do we proceed on the assumption that "where there's smoke, there's fire"? How do we react to similar charges on the national scene? Do we repeat and believe the charges made by some of our headline-seeking representatives in their position of legislative immunity? Do we make an effort to find out the facts? Having once determined the facts, do we act on them? Do we try to stop the spread of false stories? Or if the facts are true, do we make an effort to see that justice is done? The great number of "guilt by association" charges not too long past make our answers to these questions of prime importance.

Would you conclude from these examples that there is a close tie between Christian principles and those ideas stated in the Declaration of Independence? Have any of our troubles today arisen because we have not lived our Christian beliefs? July 4 makes us aware of our fundamental political principles; it also reminds us that we have Christian principles to live by in the political world. It is not enough that we affirm these principles. If we stop here, all Christianity becomes is a comfort in times of trouble or a means of escaping present difficulties. It is not enough that we avoid doing those things which are contrary to our beliefs. If we stop here, we are like medieval monks, retiring behind a wall and making no contribution toward a better society. The Christian faith is a positive force that impels us to affirmative action, correcting those things in today's living which are not in accord with the spirit of Christianity.

This needed affirmative action, seeking solutions to problems in today's living, involves sacrifice. In some cases it is not so severe as in others; in some cases these sacrifices won't affect some of us. Nevertheless, affirmative Christian action to make actual conditions in today's living agree with our principles and beliefs entails some degree of sacrifice for all of us. Let us have the courage of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, who concluded thus:

"And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the Protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor."

Who were the men who made this pledge? They were Thomas Jefferson, a large plantation owner; Elbridge Gerry, a shipowner and trader; George Clymer, a merchant; Benjamin Franklin, a printer; Robert Morris, a banker; John Witherspoon, a Presbyterian minister; Roger Sherman, a shoemaker and shopkeeper; George Wythe, a judge; and many other distinguished and ordinary people. Have we any less to lose than they did? Certainly they stood to gain *if* they were successful. But they had much to lose if they failed. Likewise, we stand to gain by united action to correct present-day violations of our Christian principles. But we must not underestimate the cost of the permanent revolution that is always with us when we try to make these principles work.

* * * * *

1776 Speaks to 1952

The program committee will find the Declaration of Independence material here so assembled that they can use it just as it is for a discussion topic.

One member of the group can introduce the topic by telling some of the main facts about the Declaration. The final paragraph might be quoted to introduce some of its signers. The point of the program is that some of these selfsame complaints directed at the king in 1776 can be used against us today.

Choosing from several of the quotations, the leader will be able to bring out discussion about the various topics simply by referring to the group some of the questions presented in the article. Make certain that these searching questions are not fended off with a simple yes or no. Ask, "Why?" Probe for reasons and facts. Then arrive at some conclusions about the ways we can put into practice the timeless principles of the Declaration.

Trinity Season Began June 8

Some suggestions for relating your programs to this season of the Christian year

By George Miles Gibson

THE first half year of the Christian calendar closes with three great observances: Ascension Sunday, May 25; Pentecost, June 1; and Trinity Sunday, June 8. All through this first half year, *God has been speaking to man* through the major events of the life of Christ from his birth, through Lent, to the high climax in the ascension. Henceforth, Christ is no longer merely an earthly teacher, but King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The Christian life is centered in him; it acknowledges his lordship over every area of existence and seeks to know and to do his will.

The first half of the year emphasizes the way God speaks to man; *man's response to God* is symbolized in the observances that occur from June through December. This is the main emphasis of the worship, preaching, and activities of the Church as Christians make their proper response to the call of God through Christ. The whole summer quarter, from July to September inclusive, falls within this second half year, carrying the themes of Pentecost and Trinity Sunday into practical application. This is the Trinity season.

This is DR. GIBSON'S third article on the Christian year. The series will conclude in the next issue of CROSSROADS. Dr. Gibson is professor of homiletics at McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago.

There is a wide range of freedom, through the Christian year, for planning themes and programs for this period. Dates and seasons are not so definitely fixed in the public mind as Easter and Christmas. Group leaders may exercise ingenuity in selecting materials and in working out their own ideas for a stimulating group experience. In the summer months, less formal gatherings in homes or in the out of doors often add to the reality of the group experience. New guest leaders may be introduced. The members themselves should be especially encouraged to contribute original shares to the programs. For the Trinity season main emphases are suggested here. Working them into programs can be adapted to the needs of each group.

Pentecost

A week, at least, may be devoted to continuing the Pentecost theme. When we have passed the Day of Pentecost on June 1, "the birthday of the Church," we are still in the season of Pentecost. The main question is, How may Christians, in the organization called the Church, best respond to the call of God in the life of Christ? There are many interesting books on the Church. Though many of these are written chiefly for ministers, some may be found that will be highly informing and interesting to lay people of all ages. For instance, Henry P. Van Dusen's *What Is the Church Doing?* covers many actual accomplishments of the modern Church and answers the skeptical attitude with which that title question is often asked. In a similar vein, John R. Scotford asks in his title, *Church Union, Why Not?* and offers a challenging layman's view of what is happening in the Universal Church. Discussions could well include the local church program in your own community and the work of the Presbyterian denomination in its foreign, national, and educational work. The *Christian Faith and Life* curriculum in CROSSROADS from October, 1950, through June, 1951, is rich in lore on the Church.

The Doctrine of the Trinity

Trinity Sunday is one of the new celebrations in the calendar if compared with Pentecost, which dates from Bible times. Thomas à Becket observed Trinity Sunday in England in the twelfth century, and it was not official over the whole Church until the fourteenth. It is the only Sunday in the year that celebrates the doctrine of the Trinity. This description of God as "three in one" confuses many people. Some, however, have been helped toward an understanding of it by a simple comparison.

Psychologists often speak of personality as behaving in three ways: by

thought, feeling, and will. It is always one person who does these three things; the same person thinks, feels, and acts. When he thinks, he is the whole person who thinks; and it is so when he feels or acts. Ordinarily, all three modes of expression are involved in everything the person does, mixed in different proportions. This certainly does not mean that persons are committees, or triplets, or Hydra-headed beings; it simply means that no person is complete who is not capable of all three of these modes of expression.

The doctrine of the Trinity is roughly something like that, though it must be remembered that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are real *Persons,* and not merely different ways of thinking of God. No comparison is entirely adequate. Indeed, there cannot be anything in human experience that exactly corresponds to the nature of God. That is why the Church has had to try to define its belief in God in terms of the Trinity. If the doctrine is difficult, it is because the subject is a mystery.

The doctrine has a long history, having found its way through controversies in the days when heresies threatened the life of the Church. Now a heresy is not a falsehood; it is a part truth taken as the whole. Some would say that God is creative power; others would emphasize God as redeemer, as he was seen in Jesus; and yet others would speak of God's continuing presence as pervading spirit that men could find without help from Jesus or the Bible. The most crucial point in the controversy was reached at the Council of Nicaea. There Arius, a Greek minister at Alexandria, maintained that Jesus was not fully God, whereas the great theologian, Athanasius, insisted that he was no less truly God than the Father is. After much struggle, Athanasius won the debate. The Holy Spirit was equally recognized as a Person of the Godhead, and thus the doctrine of the Trinity became the center of Christian thought about the divine Sovereign. As God the Father, he creates; as God the Son, he redeems; as God the Holy Spirit, he is ever present, moving within history, touching human hearts and consciences in each age.

This teaching gives us a vaster conception of God; all other ideas of him are limited to some attribute or to some one side of his nature. The Trinitarian teaching is nearer than any other to full justice to the Bible idea of God. Thus, the God of the Bible and of the Church is seen to be "perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

Do you see now why the season stressing man's response to God's action is called "Trinity"? It is the three-person God who initiates the response, and it is for the glory of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that we engage in social action and Christian service. Rehearse in your mind the various emphases of the Christian year as we have discussed them in this series of articles: Advent, God coming in Christ; Epiphany, Christ appearing to all men; Lent and Passiontide, God-in-Christ sacrificing himself for mankind; Easter, his resurrection; Ascension; Pentecost, the birthday of the Church and outpouring of the Holy Spirit; and Trinity, the Church engaged in service and in honor for the triune God.

A serious group of Christians would do well in their meetings for a number of weeks to consider what it means to serve and glorify God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. For very serious thought the group may well follow Donald Baillie's book, *God Was in Christ,* which shows the limitations of anything less than the Trinity and demonstrates the fullness of the Trinitarian concept.

The programs may be given a practical emphasis as the members of the group seek to know the will of God and to plan actual ways by which they may help in bringing about his will in their own group life, and in individual lives.

Program Emphases

A few specific program plans appropriate to this season may be suggested, but in each case it is hoped that they will be adapted to the particular group.

A program on prayer will be useful. Prayer is a means of knowing what God wills; it also helps us to do the difficult things required by Christian living. George Buttrick's book on *Prayer,* or *Prayer and the Common Life,* by Georgia Harkness, will offer many profitable suggestions.

The Christian view of human nature will be a very helpful consideration. There are many answers to the question, What is man? These answers range from extremely optimistic views of human nature to the pessimistic view that "you can't change human nature" and the accompanying assumption that we must put up with injustice, stupidity, and war. What does the Bible say? What does God want?

An evening on **social attitudes of Christians** promises great interest and may result in a larger view on questions of race, war, labor, etc. Compassion is the key attitude of Christians toward all God's people. A book such as *God and the Nations,* edited by Paul N. Poling, will prove highly stimulating.

Excellent programs have also been formed on such themes as Christianity and Science, Christianity and Art, Christianity and Education, Christianity and Marriage. All such topics are in keeping with the season that, more than any other, stresses the application of Christian principles to all personal and cultural life.

THE HANDICAPPED CHILD

A Program for Your Adult Group

IN THE first section of this magazine John Charles Wynn has written about "The Handicapped Child in Your Home." This thorough discussion of the subject provides the basic material you need for a program.

An Interview Program

Knowledge about handicapped children is rather specialized and limited to a few people in any one community. Search out a person who is acquainted with this field to invite to your meeting, and make this type of program an interview. Probable prospects are physicians, public health officers, educators, psychologists, social workers, parents of handicapped children, or adults who have themselves lived through the experience of a handicapped childhood.

A combination of interview and address can make for an absorbing meeting. Let the interviewer be appointed from the group. He must be one who understands the material in order to ask intelligent questions.

Problems to put to the authority can be guided by information in this article. Others can relate to facilities for the handicapped in the locality, the presence of organizations such as

parents' groups, helps in this work, and the prevailing patterns of disabling diseases.

How times are changing in this regard will make an interesting side light. The handicapped are now encouraged to do much more for themselves than formerly (the broken-back case is no longer an inevitable bed case; the cerebral palsied are taught to fend somewhat for themselves). Institutions for the handicapped have improved in quality and in number. People on the street no longer stare so rudely at the crippled or disfigured as they once did.

Discuss specialized schools and institutions for the handicapped. What are their advantages? their dangers?

Examine honestly what families of normal children can do to help the handicapped in social contacts, attitudes, or physical assistance.

Discuss the family complications and the need for family love as mentioned in the article. How do these principles apply to *any* family?

The Best Use of My Energy and Time

"I haven't the time!" and "I couldn't do *that!*" are two familiar excuses when people are asked to help in the church or anywhere else. How much truth is there in these excuses? Do we have untapped reservoirs of time and talents? This article provides material for a group discussion of this problem.

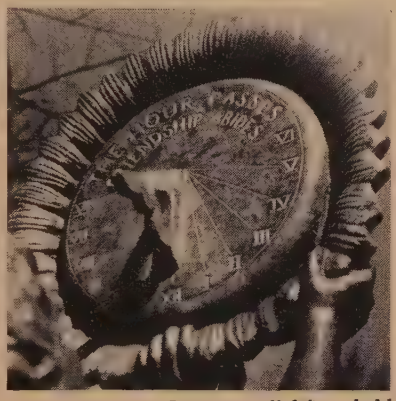
MEREDITH WILSON tells a fable about the band whose music so pleased a king that he opened to the musicians his royal treasury. With an expansive gesture he invited them to walk in and to fill up their instruments with as much gold as they could hold. For the bass tuba player and the drummer that was lovely. But one man dejectedly departed, saying, "And there I stood with my piccolo!"

Far too many of us meet life's opportunities with a piccolo response. We feel that our energies or our time will not permit us to make full use of the possibilities we confront. We excuse ourselves from living each day to the hilt by recounting the numerous complications that surround each hour. The result is a feeling of fatigue and futility.

A Question of Choices

To leave enough time and sufficient strength to accomplish our assignments, we must make careful choices between the things that are important and those which are not. The sad, simple fact is that most of us waste our resources by making the wrong selections.

We live too near the surface of our abilities, dreading to call upon our deeper resources. It is as if a strong man were to do his work with only one finger. With all the fascinating gadgets and amusements of our day, we are easily tempted to "lay waste our powers" on unworthy objects and activities. But life is too short, its demands too great, to fritter it away foolishly.



This bronze sunflower sundial is upheld by two laughing children. It is located in Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia.

> "For some men die by shrapnel,
> And some go down in flames,
> But most men perish inch by inch
> In play at little games."[1]

Instead of challenging men to triumphant living, the present crisis has been for some an excuse to adopt the slot-machine philosophy of life. They hope that by inserting a small coin they may someday hit the jackpot with a minimum of effort.

Our Checking Account of Time

In James Thurber's fairy tale, *The Thirteen Clocks,* all the castle clocks had stopped one afternoon at ten minutes before five. Ever since that, time had been "then," but never "now." Not only in that fictitious castle but in many a troubled life it never seems to be "now." With no idea of how to balance their checkbook of time, too many squander their assets or even overdraw the account.

For this there is no ordinary necessity. Each person each day receives a new portion of time—twenty-four hours. Every hour contains sixty minutes—for rich and poor alike. It is said that Andrew Carnegie was willing to offer two hundred million dollars for an extra ten years of time. No amount of wealth, however, can purchase this precious commodity. It is a gift. It cannot be hoarded. It must be used for good or for ill before the next deposit is entered. You can always count on receiving all the time there is, one day at a time. Even if you waste it, a new present of time will be handed you the following day.

Time is a marvelous value, steady, dependable, certain. To use its hours intelligently necessitates a careful priority system. Decisions must be made in favor of items of greater importance against those of lesser.

Energy

William James was one of the first observers to point out the curious phenomenon of "second wind" in our use of energy. His essay, "The Energies of Men," insists that (1) most people give up their work activity too soon; (2) if only they would work on, there would come to them a new release of energy; and (3) if our project requires an unusual amount of energy, the supply is often increased without our knowing how.

The origin of this reserve fund is partly in the vast unused supply of our energy. Few of us live up to the

[1] By Robert Abrahams, in *The Saturday Evening Post.*

limits of our ability. It is said that the average person's mental activity takes up no more than 20 per cent of his brain capacity. The human brain is capable of continuous, hard activity without suffering any disability. It is now widely agreed that the so-called nervous breakdown does not result from hard mental labor, but from other factors such as worry, fear, and hatred. Likewise, "work does not wear us out; but an emotional jag of feeling abused and overburdened very quickly produces a cumbered Martha."[2]

Physical energy, too, is seldom used to the point of full efficiency, Professor James claimed, because we develop the habit of quitting when we "feel" tired. We ought instead to utilize the fuller amounts of energy within the bounds of good health and common sense. Our energy differs from our time in that the total supply available to people varies with the individual. Yet most people can probably push beyond their habitual level of work and be surprised as the "second wind" comes in to lift their production to new levels.

A Christian's Time and Energy

F. Scott Fitzgerald, in a low note of melancholy, once wrote, "There are only the pursued, the pursuing, the busy and the tired." He was wrong. Without any sense of futile pursuit, feverish busyness, or tiredness, there are some who accomplish large tasks and move on to still others.

This ought to characterize the Christian. Bred with the conviction that his possessions, his time, his talents—yes, his very life—come as gifts from God, he feels a keen sense of obligation to use them correctly. Such a conviction consecrates life and work. It forces one to spend his energy and his days in those activities which would be judged worth-while by the will of God as we prayerfully understand it.

In this we have a divine example. "Jesus of Nazareth was master of the art of spending time. He never let it master him. He did not give the impression of dashing about Palestine trying to save time and keep to a schedule. He knew that his earthly working days were short. He said so. There was an air of urgency about him, but there was no feverish hurrying. He had time to sit and talk with individuals along the way. He paused to play with little children. He took time off to spend whole hours in prayer. But was it taking time off? Off from what? Ah, Jesus was not keeping to a calendar. He was fulfilling a life. And if we are to fulfill life, we must live our days to the full, so putting our whole selves into the present moment that the moment becomes a bit of eternal life. Thus the Master was above the passing of time. He measured the time he had to spend not by clocks and calendars but by the continuity and growth of life. Said he, 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.' He was going with God, and so he had all the time in the world."[3]

Better than any other, the Christian ought to understand the nature of energy and of time. Convinced that these are gifts of God put into human hands for use, the Christian realizes the necessity for accounting for their proper expenditure.

The apostle Paul was a man of unbounded energy who made a tremendous record of service during his life. His was a singleness of purpose: "One thing I do . . . I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (*Phil. 3: 13, 14,* R.S.V.). A letter to his friends at Ephesus finds him advising them to be wise, *"making the most of the time"* (*Eph. 5: 16,* R.S.V.).

Again, choices are demanded. Many things a Christian foregoes are not wrong in themselves. They are just not so worth-while as some others. The refusal of some, the acceptance of others, depends upon a standard of Christian stewardship.

Time spent in quiet devotions, for instance, cannot be written off as time ill spent. Rather, it helps to set the pitch for the remainder of the day. From such an experience, be it devotional reading, thoughtful prayer, or silent listening to the word of God, it is possible to return with new zest. A prophet centuries ago knew this truth and from a heart of sincerity wrote, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (*Isa. 40: 31*).

Challenge Calls Us Out

If we were to settle down to the level of living in which we are most comfortable, few would show any notable ambition. It takes a challenge to pull us above our customary rut. We are creatures of habit. We rarely desire to push our performance beyond the minimum.

Yet some people find time enough and energy enough to get everything done that they ought to do. The busy always have time, we are often told. How do they do it?

They have learned to live on a higher level of power, and with the unusual stimulation of challenge they remain there. They find life worth living! Their work, their ideas, their enthusiasms keep them in trim. And the more they do it, the better they are able to continue. They live in these greater heights of accomplishment because they are challenged by factors of enough importance to demand their full response.

Balzac worked sixteen hours a day, turning out seventy-four masterpieces of French literature in just twenty years. Douglas Freeman, according to *Time* magazine, arose at 2:30 each morning in order to spend the early hours working on his biography of George Washington; then he drove to work, where he edited the important metropolitan daily, *The Richmond News Leader,* the remainder of the day. Winston Churchill, during the Second World War, worked an eighteen-hour day much of the time, administering a great land, preparing speeches, writing books, and even painting in oils.

The Christian, better than most, has the opportunity to spend his life for some purpose that will outlive him. More than others, he ought to be able to feel the tug of challenge, unlocking his ability and energy to meet the task in the time given him. And he, above all else, knows how to reach for spiritual resources that are beyond his own. Underneath him he can feel the everlasting arms of God.

A Program Plan

Since everyone suffers from this problem of depletion of time and energy, everyone in the adult group should have a chance to participate in the program. A number of well-placed assignments, if given two weeks in advance, should turn up some good features.

• As a man to prepare a time budget for a typical twenty-four-hour

[2] From *Martha and Mary,* by Josephine Benton. (Pendle Hill Pamphlet No. 36.)

[3] From *The Fine Art of Using,* by Ralph W. Sockman. Copyright, 1946, by The Board of Missions and Church Extension of The Methodist Church. Used by permission.

period. It should include work, meals, transportation, recreation, worship, sleep, and other categories.

• Assign a woman to do the same thing for a homemaker's schedule. Both this and the man's time budget could be placed on a blackboard for comparison.

• For a woman's group, you can procure an interesting filmstrip lecture on motion and time study in homemaking, entitled *Take Time to Make Time,* from Household Finance Corporation, 919 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago 11, Ill. It is available for loan showings of one week; the only cost is return postage on the filmstrip.

• Request someone whose daily devotional habits are well disciplined to tell what he does in private worship, what are its values, its difficulties. Cite good books on this subject, and other helps.

• Another member can lead a discussion on the stewardship of time. How much time should we give to the church? How does this compare to other activities? What is a Christian measure of our time?

• This statement has been agreed upon by a group of Protestant Churches as the Christian basis of stewardship. Discuss its implications for one's time and energy:

"Christian stewardship is the practice of systematic and proportionate giving of time, abilities, and material possessions, based on the conviction that these are a trust from God, to be used in his service, for the benefit of all mankind, in grateful acknowledgment of Christ's redeeming love."

• Have one or more members clip from newspapers and magazines all the advertisements they can find that appeal to "that tired feeling." Assemble these to discover how sellers of mattresses, patent medicines, vacation plans, and others use this nearly universal complaint to interest buyers.

• Discuss the problem of human energy, how to conserve it, what to spend it for, its characteristics. What have sleep and diet to do with it? How does our attitude affect energy?

• Put together whatever of the above suggestions you wish to bring a full response of interest and discussion from the group.

• Discuss the implications of the view that a Christian owes a portion of his time to God. How many of our seven days a week belong to him? What kind of activities come within this concept?

The Director Discusses—

"So Your Programs Don't Click!"

SO YOUR programs don't click! There is a reason, and it is probably one of these three:

1. One person has the sole responsibility for programs.

2. You depend solely on speakers and have little or no group participation.

3. Not enough time is given to evaluation of past programs and careful planning of those forthcoming.

If one poor soul is charged with responsibility for securing programs and receives little or no guidance from anyone else, he usually turns in desperation to a list of speakers. There is just no doubt about it—one of the besetting and deep-seated sins of adult groups is the acceptance of the fallacy that "a program is incomplete without a speaker." This is an idea that should be buried—and soon! Again, too many groups leave their planning until the last minute, with no view whatsoever as to what experience those attending will have.

Therefore, leaving the negative side of this problem, here is a suggestion that may help. It can be stated simply: "In the planning of programs, six or eight heads are better than one." For example, if all the officers of the couples club will meet informally at least two or three evenings during their year of office, preferably at someone's home, to plan their programs, they will have taken the first step toward insuring success. The purpose of these meetings is twofold:

1. To plan the broad outline of the entire year's program.

2. To plan specifically the three or four programs that lie immediately ahead.

The creative possibilities of six or eight people as they look at a given program are almost unlimited. Discussion should center around the elements of fellowship, worship, program, projects, the needs of the group, and the like. Perusing the Program Guide section of CROSSROADS will be an eye opener for many. Critical evaluation of previous meetings is important in working out future programs.

It usually follows as a by-product of this kind of planning that the officers of a group are more closely bound together because of their fellowship, and each feels a personal responsibility for the success of the group. In addition, the programs planned usually represent in miniature the thinking of the group rather than that of one person.

Our correspondence indicates a growing use of this method. A woman in Colorado writes: "After hearing it suggested at a conference last summer we have started using all eight of our officers to plan our programs. Two things have happened: First, my husband and I have become good friends of two couples whom we knew but casually before. And then, our programs have become adventures rather than burdens."

So your programs don't click! Why don't you try this method? It has worked for many groups and will probably do the same for yours.

Sincerely yours,
RAYMOND V. KEARNS, JR.
Director of the Department of Adult Work

A Young Adul

Gets

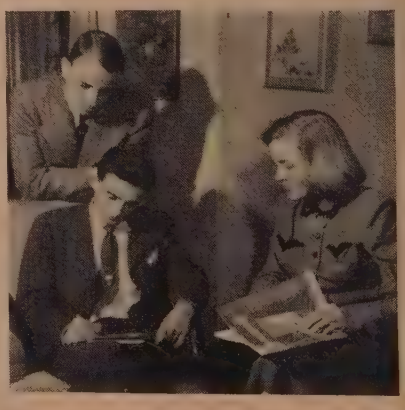
Photos by Georgine Barrie

1. First we talked with our pastor about our hopes for a young adult group. We knew how much we wanted it. He told us some of his dreams and plans for the church that involved our age group.

2. The plan was simple. We would phone a few others, whose interest we knew we could count on, to meet at the manse and discuss the formation of a group.

3. There were seven of us in all that first night. (We are now more than 50.) We studied the *Geneva Fellowship Program Handbook* and decided ours should be a Sunday evening meeting each week.

4. The church office supplied us with a roll of young adults in the 19 to 30-year range. We went out in teams to call on them and rounded up a good crowd for the next Sunday night. ←



5. You can't keep them coming though, unless there's something worth coming for. A program committee began work at once on our study-action discussions. →

Group Under Way

7. It seems best by far for our own members to lead discussions. But we invite authorities like Professor Aubrey to sit in as resource people to give help when needed.

6. How did the apostles ever operate without a duplicating machine? Our publicity crew turns invitations and program calendars.

8. Eating we found is more than refreshment! It broadens our fellowship, and often it means that the discussion time is lengthened while we sip our coffee and continue talking.

9. We're having fun too. Once every two weeks, at least, we plan a social affair. In the summer, they're mostly picnics, parties, trips, square dances. Work nights are getting into the schedule too.

10. Now that we've begun some projects, we have a feeling of being of more service to our church. One project handled by our members is the book table in the church narthex each Sunday, the proceeds of which go to work for underprivileged children.

Discuss this question in your group—

"How Can I Have Daily Devotions?"

By Ernest N. Bigelow

MANY adults are genuinely perplexed about the problem of having personal daily devotions. Here are some suggestions that might help:

1. *Have a set time to pray.* We can learn to pray just as we can learn to swim. But it takes time and deliberate effort. Set yourself a fifteen- to thirty-minute period early in the morning or before retiring. Stick with it a while, and you'll feel lost when you miss it. A Scotsman used to advise, "Throw a guinea in the river every morning you miss prayertime." We need the prayertime more than we need the guinea.

2. *Use different forms of prayer.* Don't be afraid of formality in devotions. Most of us need forms because we're not always far enough along to pray on our own. Let's not scorn bowing of the head, closing of the eyes, kneeling, and praying out loud. Personally, I think the lean-back-and-relax-to-get-thoughts-of-God advice is a lot of tommyrot. Prayer is a distinctly worded, down-at-the-knees business. Otherwise we would never pray at the moments when we need most to pray: when our soul is dry within us and we don't *want* to pray. Use the Lord's Prayer. Sing a hymn. Use other great prayers of the Church.

3. *Do some Bible-reading.* The heart of the Bible is Jesus Christ. We cannot do better than to seek to discover the meaning of his life and work.

One way to read the Bible is to read it as you would a story. Start with Mark's Gospel. It can be read aloud in an hour. Read it through at one sitting to get the sweep of Jesus' life. Mark will give most of the *facts* of His ministry. For His teachings and parables, check through Matthew and Luke. Then read John's Gospel for more facts and much interpretation of the facts. After that, you may want to try Paul's letter to the Galatians for further meaning of the gospel of Christ. Incidentally, reading the Bible itself is easier than reading books *about* the Bible, and much more interesting.

4. *Read a short passage at a time.* The other kind of Bible-reading consists of a few verses or a chapter each day during your time set for praying. Here you are not interested so much in history, biography, or sweep of events. Rather, you are interested in the direct communication out of the Bible to your heart. Go back over Mark or John; review a small section each day. Then as you come to a message, a command, an entreaty of Jesus, pray. Ask: "Lord, do you mean that for me?" . . . "Am I supposed to live by that?" . . . "Is that what you want me to do today?" Make it personal. Let God speak to you through this written Word. Be open to God's Spirit to command, stimulate, forgive, or comfort you. Let it be God's Word to you.

5. *Use other devotional books.* Also in this set time for prayer there is room for reading devotional books. *Today* magazine brings daily messages and helps to guide our thoughts in worship. As you grow in your ability to have personal devotions, you will want other helps.

John Baillie's *A Diary of Private Prayer* has a prayer for morning and one for evening each day for a month. These prayers are rich and suggestive.

A three-hundred-year-old one, republished by our Westminster Press, is William Law's *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life.* Despite its ponderous title, it is a delightful book. In fact, one man, thinking devotions were supposed only to be solemn, felt ashamed of himself because he enjoyed reading this book and found himself chuckling over his devotions!

And one of the best of all is also among the oldest—over five hundred years old—*The Imitation of Christ,* by Thomas à Kempis. What are the things we must deal with in our hearts? Inner fear, resentment, selfishness, and pride. These are what this book holds up before the light of God. To read this book will make a difference in our practice of Christianity.

6. *Get accustomed to "flash prayers."*

In addition to set times of prayer, you can use "flash prayers" all day long. In odd moments you may feel like uttering (aloud or silently) brief prayers of praise to God, of thanks to him, of requests for help on specific tasks and in facing certain persons. As you go up to a house, pray for those whom you are about to see; as you enter an office or set yourself to a job, pray.

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MR. BIGELOW is pastor of Norwalk Presbyterian Church, Norwalk, Ohio.

For Church Officers

ELDERS, DEACONS, TRUSTEES

All church officers will be interested in this article, which lists the advantages of the rotary system of electing members to our boards.

Evaluating the Rotary System

By William G. Kuhen

EACH year an increasing number of churches adopt the rotary system in the election of church officers. This is the system under which an officer is elected to a full term of three years and is not eligible for re-election to another full term on the same board until at least one year has elapsed.

Variants to this plan are followed by some churches in the light of particular circumstances. Some apply it only to the boards of deacons and trustees. Some do not require the year of inactivity. Many allow re-election to a full term of three years if the officer has been filling an unexpired term. A member of one board is often elected to a different board without the year of inactivity.

The rotary system without variants produces numerous advantages for both large and small churches. Because one third of the board is retired each year under this system, permanence without stagnation and change without disruption are thus made possible.

In the Christian Church both permanence and change are essential to progress. Methods that worked fifty years ago may not work now. Yet successful procedures and worthy traditions should be maintained.

The Boards Become More Representative

If the personnel of the church board does not change over the years, two results frequently appear: the average age of the members gradually increases, and the boards become less representative of all age groups within the church. A truly representative body is one of the major characteristics of the Presbyterian form of church government. The tendency of some older members of boards is to look to the past instead of the future. That this need not be the case was illustrated in a session over which the writer was moderator. A man of ninety-two years was the most progressive member. Incidentally, the church did not have the rotary system, and the average age of the majority of the elders was over seventy-five!

Some people may object to the rotary system because it requires the church to be on the lookout constantly for prospective members of the boards. What appears to be a disadvantage is really an advantage. Every person who unites with the church may be considered as a possible nominee for some office. Older members may be thought of in the light of their leadership potentialities.

One of the glaring weaknesses of most churches is the lack of lay leadership. A continual search for officer material is a major step toward meeting this deficiency. Such a search will uncover so many possibilities that it need be said of no church that a small group of persons direct and control it. The government of the local church will become truly representative in this way.

A Training Program Is Developed

Another advantage of the rotary system is that under it many persons are trained for church leadership. Because a number of new people are added to the boards each year, a training program becomes necessary. Some churches each year set up church officer training classes for all members of the boards; material is provided for these classes by the Board of Christian Education.[1] These classes may meet for several weeks, or they may meet once a month for several months. The material under consideration is vital because it is new to some and provides a quick review for the older members of the boards.

Other Areas of Service Are Opened

Because a larger number of persons are elected each year under this system, those retiring from the active membership of the boards are eligible for service in other areas of the church life. Men of understanding, breadth of vision, and devotion to the program of the church make strong members of important committees, such as those on Christian education, evangelism and membership, and finance. Others may become active in the youth and adult programs of the church.

[1] The following church officer textbooks are available from the Department of Adult Work, Board of Christian Education, 1105 Witherspoon Building, Philadelphia 7, Pa.: *Your Church and Your Job,* 50 cents; *Stewardship of the Church's Program,* 25 cents; *Going On with New Life,* 10 cents; *Your Church in the World Neighborhood,* 25 cents; *Social Action in the Local Church,* free; and *Administering the Church Program,* 20 cents.

MR. KUHEN is pastor of the Boulevard Presbyterian Church, Columbus, Ohio.

The Good Effect on the Officer

Another outstanding advantage of the rotary system is the psychological effect it has on the officer himself. If a man knows he is to serve on the board for only three years, he may be willing to devote more time and energy to the office than he would otherwise. In addition to the normal work of the boards, including serving on subcommittees, a deacon or an elder may well be placed as a group leader over ten to fifteen families within the church. For three years he would be responsible for the growth of those in his group in both the extent and depth of their contact with the church. He would not be satisfied until everyone in his group had become a definite part of some smaller organization within the church and until each had some form of private devotions.

All Officers Are Spiritual Leaders

Still a further advantage of the rotary system is that many of the members on the boards serve on all the boards within a few years. The church comes to see that there is no such thing as a "trustee type" or an "elder type." Trustees should be endowed with spiritual insight, and elders should possess business acumen. As the background and experience of the different officers extend to the various boards, there come an enlarged understanding and a spirit of unity.

It Educates the Congregation Too!

Finally, this system makes necessary ordination and installation services in the worship of the church.

Public services of ordination are required by our church law for those elected to the board of deacons and to the session. A service for the public recognition of trustees is also provided. If new men are elected each year, this means that the entire congregation is made aware annually of the duties of these officers. The members of the congregation will grow in their understanding of the duties of church officers and of their own responsibility to the boards. This is not only a means of educating the church members in the government of both the New Testament Church and our own, but it also serves as a means of rededication to the task of the Christian Church—carrying out the mission of Jesus Christ.

The trustees should be concerned about this problem.

A Program for Church Insurance

By Keene Abbott

It is impossible, within the narrow scope of this article, to deal exhaustively with the many desirable insurance coverages available for church protection. However, mention will be made of a few essential forms under these two categories:

I. Those insuring against physical damage to, or loss of, church properties.

Fire. The most basic and most obvious contract of protection is the fire insurance policy. Rare indeed is the church that does not arm itself with this fundamental coverage.

Such insurance may be written for terms of from one to five years, the most common probably being the three-year term. Term-rating is based on a graded premium scale which affords attractive savings for periods beyond the annual term. Thus a three-year policy becomes two and one half times the annual premium, and one for five years is four times the annual. Premiums for such are payable in advance.

Many churches have elected a budget plan of staggered expirations, whereby the fire portfolio is divided, for example, into five annual blocks (or anniversary groupings of concurrent policies), so that one fifth will expire each year. This scheme earns the twenty per cent reduction attached to five-year coverage, yet escapes the heavy initial outlay of capital necessary to finance the entire program on a straight five-year basis at once. Furthermore, a three-year or a five-year plan is a systematic arrangement that lends itself readily to budgeting the insurance account.

Boiler and Machinery. For churches with hot water or steam-heating systems or those which generate their own power, boiler and machinery insurance is on the required list. Coverage is granted for a blanket sum, being the limit per accident, for loss of, or damage to, the insured objects, such as boilers, heat-generating equipment, and similar units itemized on the schedule. Protection is also present for damage resulting from accident to other church property, as the building that houses the heating plant; and, finally, damage to the property and persons of third parties for which the insured may be held liable.

Church Burglary, Robbery, Theft, and Larceny. Here is another important segment of insurance protection which must receive the thoughtful study of all church managers. A safe and more streamlined method of insuring such hazards is by way of the comprehensive, broader form policy, which has become available within recent years.

Suitable for the smaller church, with limited means, is the so-called Church Protective Policy for Burglary, Robbery, and Theft. There are five insuring clauses covering values up to $200 each, for an over-all principal sum of $1,000.

II. Those insuring third-party liabilities.

Third-Party Liability Insurance. The modern insurance portfolio contains many component coverages, not the least of which, in social importance, is that large group of policies protecting the insured against his third-party liabilities.

All public liability insurance is designed as a protection for the claimant against these unintentional wrongs and indemnities.

Public Liability Insurance. Once a church has secured insurance for the more apparent hazards of fire, burglary, and theft, it may be felt by the management that it has wisely and adequately provided for all impending contingencies. Actually, such is not the case. Houses of worship are community centers of public assemblage. They frequently accommodate great numbers of people at one time,

MR. ABBOTT is assistant sales manager of the Utica Mutual Insurance Company, Utica, New York.

WAS THIS CHURCH ADEQUATELY INSURED?

not only on Sundays but throughout the week. In this sense, they are not unlike theaters, restaurants, and stores. They have their being in service to the public. As such they are peculiarly susceptible to all liability claims arising out of the premises operation. Here are a few cases in point:

1. At St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Lowell, Massachusetts, forty people were injured, three women probably fatally, when over one hundred members crowded onto an outdoor porch for a religious service. Under this unusual weight the floor collapsed, dropping the entire group into the cellar, fifteen feet below.

2. The Supreme Court of Minnesota reaffirmed the liability of a church for injuries sustained by a volunteer Bible class teacher, upholding a verdict against the church for $3,500. The claimant was injured when a piano fell on one of his legs while the instrument was being moved. Evidence presented showed negligence because the church and its officers knew one of the casters was missing and had taken no measures to remedy the fault.

3. In Bruce vs. Central M. E. Church, 147 Michigan 230, the court held that "corporations administering a charitable trust, like all other corporations, are subject to the general laws of the land and cannot, therefore, claim exemption from responsibility for the torts of their agents."

4. The Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City was sued and had to pay $5,000 damages when a woman member of an amateur cast rehearsing a play in the recreation building fell through a hole in the stage and was seriously injured.

At this point it is well to explain that responsible officers, or board members, may be held *individually* liable for negligent acts while administering church affairs. Certainly those citizens who volunteer their services in the religious life of the community are entitled to receive immunity from damages because of accidents alleged to be their fault.

Insurance Costs. It is stating the obvious that insurance, as an overhead expense, must at all times remain subservient to the budget funds allotted to it by the governing authority of the church. Not so apparent, however, is that these monies will be more or less, depending on how well "sold" the trustees are in their desire for adequate, sound protection. In short, there is an educational job to be performed, within the organization, if every insurance dollar is to purchase its full one hundred cents of coverage value. Where specialized knowledge is lacking at the top level, the grant of funds is apt to be carelessly wasted or misspent.

To overcome this management handicap, I would recommend that a single, qualified individual be appointed, who will assume sole responsibility for all insurance placements. He could probably be a member of the board of trustees. By profession he may himself be an insurance broker or agent, or perhaps a business executive who buys insurance for his firm. This officer's task will be to promote, by every persuasive means, the modern-day concept of full insurance protection for all the church properties.

To effectuate such a program he will wish to study the hazards peculiar to his own organization; then, when these have been accurately identified, to search the market for appropriate policies that will insure the exposures present. With these data on hand, he will next assemble all facts in an orderly survey of coverages that are necessary. This presentation will then be offered to the trustees for their official approval. Once his proposals are accepted, the insurance manager will constantly review all policies, prior to expiration, so that coverage may always coincide with changing conditions.

The Prayer Life

Prayer Works, by Austin Pardue. (Morehouse-Gorham Co. 127 pages. $2.00.)

Bennett Cerf recently quoted a colleague to the effect that "there are two roads to attention. Say an old thing in a new way. Say a new thing in an old way."

The Bishop of Pittsburgh, in these twenty-one radio addresses, elected the first road to our attention. He touches on many aspects of Christian life indirectly related to prayer, for example, Jesus' own viewpoint that prayer is a way of life rather than an isolated action. His illustrations drawn from everyday experiences are also gospel-like. Ultra-Protestant eyebrows will arch over encouragement of prayers for the dead, but personal predilections need not detract from the general value of the work.—*John Oldman, Jr.*

Over the Crossroads Desk

THE CROSSROADS desk this issue has been the back seat of a Nash sedan! During the summer of 1951 I have been teaching leadership training schools in Montana, Wyoming, and Oregon; therefore, the editing of this issue has been done either en route or while stationed at one of these schools. My wife and I have a very good arrangement: she drives while I edit. And since we have been driving through the magnificence of our American Northwest, editing has been done in the atmosphere of pungent sagebrush, Rainier ruggedness, towering redwoods, and Tahoe vastness.

We have reveled in the natural beauty of our country, but the most rewarding aspect of the whole experience has been to spend a week with the people of our Presbyterian Church in these various places. In my classes I have had those who want to learn how to be better leaders in the adult work of their church school, and the eagerness of these people, as well as their loyalty to the church and its program, encourages me greatly. My colleagues on the staff of these conferences feel that same way. Teachers of children and youth have sat with Dorothy Fritz, editor of children's publications, not only in class but also hour after hour during "free time," asking questions and sharing her valuable experience. All of us have been stimulated by the Bible studies of John Wick Bowman, professor at San Francisco Theological Seminary, San Anselmo, Calif.

Not the least valuable part of these schools is the chance they give for family living under Christian auspices. Elliston, Montana, and Story, Wyoming, were family camps where we had a chance to feel what it means to be bound in Christian community—eating, sleeping, working, playing together, linked to one another by our common bond in Christ.

The Revised Standard Version of the Old Testament will be published this fall. Those of us who have used this version of the New Testament since it came out in 1946 expect that the new translation will give us new understanding of many familiar passages and will clarify obscure terms or words that have little meaning for us today. This, after all, is the purpose of new translations: to apply the results of Biblical scholarship and to interpret the ancient Word in the living language of the day. No new translation will ever replace the matchless insights and felicitous expressions of the seventeenth century translators who gave us a valuable tool to guide us in letting God speak from his Word. Yet the need for translations of the Scripture into the language of the people has always been recognized by the Presbyterian Church. In our Westminster Confession of Faith, which was written at about thirty years after the King James Version had been translated, our Church says:

"The Old Testament in Hebrew, (which was the native language of the people of God of old,) and the New Testament in Greek, (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations,) being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical; so as in all controversies of religion the Church is finally to appeal unto them. But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God who have right unto and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner, and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope."

Next quarter we shall have an article that tells more about the work of translating the Scriptures into "the vulgar language of every nation." The article is written by J. Carter Swaim, professor at Western Theological Seminary, who has been active in interpreting the Revised Standard Version to the Church.

George L. Hunt

Editor, CROSSROADS

The David Crawford family of Havre, Montana, worship at the Elliston, Montana, Synod School for leadership training.

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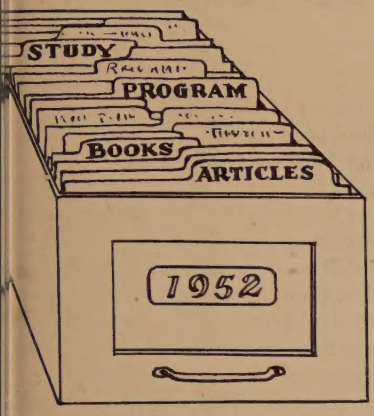

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